



Inspectors hail signs of improvement under new head

SCHOOL RATED 'INADEQUATE'

Report by Dayna Farrington

A HIGH school has been placed in special measures after being voted 'inadequate' across the board.

An Ofsted report has revealed that Ridgewood High School in Stourbridge was found to be failing in all five inspected categories.

The school has this month joined the Stour Vale Academy Trust.

The report states that the school's attendance rates have 'declined over recent years', particularly amongst disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special education needs or disabilities.

The education watchdog also found that many of the 787 students at the school were 'not aware of the potential threat from people who hold radical or extreme views.'

Inspectors discovered that effectiveness of leadership and management, quality of teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare, as well as the school's overall effectiveness, were all inadequate.

Training

Bosses at the high school, with pupils aged between 11 and 16, were told that staff should receive statutory safeguarding training to improve.

But the Ofsted report also details that the school's newly appointed headteacher - Ms Rae Cope - who joined in January, has 'brought stability to the school' and that under her leadership 'there are early signs of improvement.'

Stephen Dunster, chief executive officer for Stour Vale Academy Trust, said: "The report makes it clear that the appointment of a highly capable headteacher in January has brought stability to the school and improvements have already been made."

"Ridgewood High School officially joined the Stour Vale Academy Trust on May 1 and we are excited about the opportunities of working together."

"The Stour Vale Trust includes two 'outstanding' secondary schools and we are looking forward to working together with Ridgewood to see further rapid improvements."

"Ridgewood is a school with pupils full of potential and together we will see them flourish."

SCOUT'S HONOUR FOR VETERAN LEADER, AGED 96



Scout leader Derek Elton, aged 96, who has been awarded an MBE after more than eight decades of service into the youth movement

"I might as well keep going - I'd rather be doing that than sitting at home doing my knitting."

The words of 96-year-old Scout leader Derek Elton, who has been awarded an MBE after more than eight decades of services into the youth movement in Stourbridge.

The unsung hero was rewarded for his years of hard work and first started getting involved with the Scout group when he was just a teenager. Now, as he edges closer to 100, he still serves as the leader of Kinver Scout Camp with no plans to stop.

"I still love it - it's stupid at my age isn't it?" said Mr Elton. "I was overcome when they gave it to me. I've been volunteering for the scouts for years."

"The scouts has been there most of my life. It has done so much for me and put me on the right lines in life."

As for as his honour, Mr Elton added: "It shook me when I found out - I was overcome. I thought they'd got the wrong person!"

"I was sworn to secrecy and couldn't tell anyone, which was difficult."

"I had the official notification and thought

it should have been for somebody else. I don't deserve it."

Mr Elton was awarded the prestigious gong at The Elton Centre in St John's Road, Stourbridge, which was named in his honour after years of service to the Age Concern charity.

The ceremony took place on Monday and the Lord-Lieutenant of the West Midlands John Crabtree was in attendance to present him with his MBE in front of family, friends and scout members past and present.

REGENERATION

Council chief vows to improve roads

DUDLEY Council leader Patrick Harley has vowed to bring Stourbridge back up to its 'former glory' by focusing on regeneration of the town centre and improving the roads.

Councillor Harley said his main priority is to improve the borough's roads - including estate roads in Stourbridge - putting in an extra £1 million a year into improving them. He will also look to improve the town centre. He said: "Stourbridge, in particular with its connection with Britain in Bloom, we want to invest more money in flower beds. We want to make the area look nicer and make Stourbridge residents proud to say they live in the town."

● Investment - pages 5 and 10

POLICE

Arrests amid town centre crimewave

DUDLEY town centre has seen a spike in crime over the last fortnight, police have revealed. The area has been hit by an increasing number of offences.

A West Midlands Police spokesperson said: "We have seen an increase in offenders targeting Dudley town centre in the last couple of weeks. Some focused activities to arrest and charge those responsible has resulted in several arrests."

PLANNING

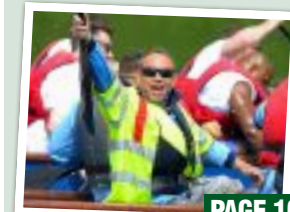
Green light given for a new cafe

SIX jobs will be created after planning chiefs gave the green light to transform a former shop into a cafe.

Dudley Council's planners have approved the application for the vacant ground floor premises in Coventry Street, Stourbridge. It is proposed that the cafe will employ four full-time members of staff and two part-time staff.

INSIDE

DRAGON BOATS RACE ACTION



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Family pay tribute to collision victim



Andrew Holdaway

THE heartbroken family of Stourbridge road accident victim Andrew Holdaway have paid tribute to him following his death in hospital, seven days after being seriously injured in a crash in his classic car.

Police are trying to find the occupants of the other vehicle involved in the collision, a blue Ford Mondeo, who fled the scene.

Mr Holdaway, aged 62, from Oldswinford, suffered serious injuries in the accident in Norton Road, at the junction with Harringay Drive in Stourbridge, on Bank Holiday Monday and died in

hospital a week later. His family said his death has left 'a gaping hole' in their hearts that would never be filled.

A statement said: "Beyond all reasonable expectations, dad held on for seven whole days. The professionalism of all of the healthcare experts and first responders gave us as a family the opportunity to spend time with my dad we would never otherwise have had.

"We are heartbroken and a gaping hole has been created in all of our hearts that will never be filled. But the compassion and love we have received from hundreds of people known and un-

known to us have helped hold us strong and retain faith in humanity, even amongst the despair."

The crash took place at around 4.20pm on May 7, when the car Mr Holdaway was driving was involved in a collision with the Mondeo.

West Midlands Police officers have reissued their appeal for information to help trace the three occupants of the Mondeo. Sergeant Alan Hands said: "Three men were spotted fleeing the scene. They ran off along Beech Road into the playing fields that lead to Mary Stevens Park."

War heroes selected for the Invictus Games

INSPIRATIONAL war heroes from the Black Country have been chosen to take part in this year's Invictus Games.

Created by Prince Harry, the Invictus Games is an international adaptive multi-sport event in which wounded, injured or sick armed services personnel and associated veterans can take part.

The team of 72 competitors selected to represent the UK at this year's competition in Australia was unveiled earlier this week at Horse Guards Parade.



Dave Watson

The group were joined by Prime Minister Theresa May, who wished them luck for the Games in October.

Dave Watson, from Halesowen, will compete in archery, athletics and rowing.

Dave lost both his legs and his right forearm when he stepped on an improvised explosive device while serving with the Scots Dragoon Guards in Afghanistan in 2010.

He said: "Sydney 2018 is a chance to prove that there is no limit and that being an amputee is not the end of my sporting journey."

"The Invictus Games gives you the power to believe in yourself."

David trains twice a week with a British Athletics coach. He took part in last year's games in Toronto and came home to Romsley with a gold for discus and bronze medal in the shot.

Also taking part will be Karl Hinett, from Tipton, who was petrol-bombed in Iraq in 2005, and Lance Corporal Clive Smith, from Walsall, given bionic legs after an explosion in Afghanistan, who plays wheelchair rugby.

Thousands enjoy night at the museum



The traction engine crew ready for the Red by Night event at the Black Country Living Museum

THOUSANDS of people flocked to the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley for the first of its summer after-hours events of the year.

The museum on Tipton Road welcomed more than 2,000 people to its Red by Night event, when it was open until 10.30pm.

Visitors were able to experience

the open-air museum in all its glory after the sun had set with fire jugglers, traction engines and performers in the museum's 26 acres.

The atmospheric evening came as part of the museum's Industrial Might weekend which saw newly restored areas open, including the Anchor Forge with its steam ham-

mer. Events coordinator Jane Allcock said: "Red by Night is showing the roots of where we came from and the really big part the Black Country played in the industrial revolution."

For more on future events visit www.bclm.co.uk/events or call 0121 5579643.

Ambulance HQ staff get to see TV award



Ambulance worker Zoe with the BAFTA

AMBULANCE staff got the chance to get their hands on the BAFTA award won by the West Midlands service.

The BBC TV show Ambulance, which follows staff responding to calls across the region, picked up the award for Best Factual Series at the awards ceremony in London last week. The famous trophy was taken to the Emergency Operations Centre in Brierley Hill for staff to see.

West Midlands Ambulance Service said on Twitter: "We had a few rather excited staff in our Emergency Operations Centre in Brierley Hill when we took a BAFTA around to show some of the people who made #Ambulance so successful."

BBC TV gangster drama, Peaky Blinders, part made at the Black Country Living Museum, won Best Drama Series.

Armed robbers threatened staff

THIEVES threatened staff with a hand gun during a robbery at a service station near Stourbridge.

Two men entered the Shell Service Station, in Bromsgrove Road, Belbroughton, wearing balaclavas and threatened staff with a gun and a hammer. The robbers were unsuccessful in getting into the safe, but stole alcohol, cigarettes and a small amount of cash.

A spokesman from West Mercia Police said: "They left through the back door of the service station and initial reports indicate they got into a small vehicle, possibly a Renault Clio, parked with the engine running. The two robbers are described as white males, approximately 5ft 6 tall, of average build and wearing hoodies." The robbery was at 10.30pm on Wednesday, May 16.

Poor law castle talk

THE Friends of Dudley Castle will be holding their latest meeting at the castle today (Thursday).

Richard Lewis is the guest speaker on the history of the poor laws at the event being held in The Undercroft at 7.30pm.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

£54,000 raised for Mayor's charities

OUTGOING Mayor of Dudley Councillor Dave Tyler, whose year as the borough's first citizen ended last week, raised around £54,000 for his three chosen charities during his time in office.

The Labour councillor, who represents Kingswinford North and Wall Heath, also kept his pledge to visit more than 100 local businesses.

Councillor Tyler raised funds for Dudley Mind, the YMCA and Dudley Alzheimer's Society.

He said: "I want to thank the people of Dudley for taking Barbara and I to their hearts and supporting us."

Movie plan for Dudley-set novel

A WRITER'S first novel, set in Dudley, is to be turned into a feature film.

Author Keith Bullock, from Malvern, is celebrating the news that his book, *The Winning Ticket*, is to be adapted for the screen later this year.

The *Winning Ticket* tells the story of a Sikh shopkeeper in Dudley who faces a crisis of conscience after tricking a customer out of a winning lottery ticket.

Keith's short story *Second Honymoon* was also filmed by Walsall's Kaush Patel, of Pat the Bull Films, and shown at Cannes Film Festival.

Comedian in third town hall date

TICKETS for Mancunian comic Jason Manford's third show at Dudley Town Hall have gone on sale.

The TV comedian will bring his *Muddle Class* show to the town hall on March 9 next year – after he revealed his love for the venue and for Black Country folk.

He performed the show to a sell-out crowd at the St James's Road venue last month. He took to Facebook during the interval of that show to post: "Top folks here in the Black Country."

He will also return to the venue with *Muddle Class* on October 3.

Bouncy castle fun at festival date in park

A FUN day is being held in Tividale in July as part of the Black Country Festival.

The event on July 7 at Tividale Park will run from 11am to 5pm, and is being organised by the Friends of Tividale Park.

There will be a children's area featuring three bouncy castles, face painting and circus skills and entertainment on stage throughout the day including dancers, singers and bands.

Leader says 'pivotal year ahead' for the borough

THE leader of Dudley Council says he hopes to build on a successful 12 months in a "pivotal year ahead".

Councillor Patrick Harley was re-elected council leader at the annual council meeting last Thursday, where he also announced some new faces to his decision-making cabinet.

The Kingswinford South councillor said one of his key focuses for the next year was tackling the state of the borough's roads (see page 5).

He also said the council's procurement programme would be a central focus, as the authority looks to save more money in the way it buys in services.

Councillor Harley said his new cabinet would be tasked with overseeing some huge programmes of work and making key decisions over the next 12 months. That includes the £353 million Midland Metro extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill, the £82 million Portersfield leisure and retail development in Dudley, growing the DY5 enterprise zone success and overseeing continued improvements in children's services.

New to the cabinet are Councillors Ruth Buttery, Simon Phipps and Angus Lees. Halesowen's Councillor David Vickers remains deputy leader. Councillors Steve Clark, Nicolas Barlow, Karen Shakespeare, Laura Taylor and Ian Kettle continue their cabinet roles.

Important role at royal wedding

A ROYAL Marine who grew up in the Black Country had an important role at the royal wedding in Windsor last Saturday, leading a military in honour of newlyweds Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.

After the couple said 'I do', thus becoming the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, 48-year-old Major Garry Mason, from Pensnett, was leading his troop along the parade route by St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.

The father-of-three revealed that after nearly 30 years in the marines he had never performed a ceremonial duty as high-profile as this. Before the event, watched by more than a billion on TV, he said: "I'm quite proud and excited. But there's a bit of nerves too."

New homes plan

EIGHT homes are planned along a main road in Lye.

Plans for properties beside the A458 High Street, near Lye bypass, have been lodged with Dudley Council.

Care home put in special measures



Edgeview Nursing Home in Kinver

A CARE home where a resident was left outside in their night clothes has been placed in special measures following a damning report.

Edgeview Nursing Home, in Kinver, has been ranked as 'inadequate' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Safety, leadership, care and responsiveness were given the bottom rating, while its effectiveness was rated as 'requires improvement' by inspectors, who visited on March 28.

The report said: "During our inspection a person remained half undressed and half in their night

clothes. For long periods of our inspection they were outside. We spoke with the registered manager, who told us, 'They sit outside all weathers, including snow or rain. We have provided them with a door bell to ring when they want to come back in'."

Inspectors also saw a vulnerable resident left alone when they should have been supervised. The report stated: "A member of staff told us 'We can leave them, they will be okay by themselves for a few minutes'. However, another staff member said 'When people are on one to ones we

must remain with them all the time due to the risks'. We discussed this with the registered manager. They told us that the person was at risk of falls if left alone."

A home spokesperson said: "We believe this is a safe environment for our service users, who are at the most complex end of the care system. Prior to this inspection, management recognised improvements could be made and was already implementing a number of changes. As a result, Edgeview Nursing Home was in a transitional period when inspectors called."

More than 700 go Round the Wrekin with Hugh

HUNDREDS got into the saddle as a popular cycling event which set off from Kingswinford into the Shropshire countryside has raised money for Compton Care – and organisers say it looks likely to better last year's total of £28,000.

Black Country cycling legend Hugh Porter MBE and Dudley North MP Ian Austin were among those tackling various routes in the Banks's Round the Wrekin sportive.

It saw around 700 cyclists set off from Kingswinford Rugby Club on Sunday in the popular event, now in its third year, featured riders of varying difficulty. The toughest task faced riders taking on the 101-mile 'epic' race, while there were also 64-mile and 24-mile rides.

Cyclists were handed medals on completing the challenge, which attracted members of many local cycle clubs, including Stourbridge and Halesowen.

Veteran

Wolverhampton's Hugh Porter, who won Commonwealth Gold in 1966, took part part as a Compton Hospice patron. Veteran Hugh, who is also a patron of Halesowen Cycling Club, has supported every Round the Wrekin Sportive since it began.

Mr Porter, aged 78, four-times world pursuit champion, took part in the 24-miler which is named in his honour. He said he was hopeful of beating last year's fundraising total of £28,000, which featured a major contingent of pensioner pedal pushers.

He said: "It was a great day, there was massive camaraderie and everyone was in good spirits."

"The weather was sensational and we had 700 take part. I'm really pleased with the support. I really enjoyed it. It's great to be involved with raising money for such a fantastic charity."

It means more than £75,000 has now been raised for the hospice through the event since its launch three years ago.

Labour MP for Dudley North Mr Austin, who is a member of Stourbridge Cycling Club, took on the 64-mile route.

Event sponsor Banks's will help to boost the fundraising total.



Stourbridge Cycling Club trio Nick Preece, Colin Talbot and Christian Atherley took part in the sportive



Cyclists taking part in the Round the Wrekin Sportive



Hugh Porter shares a joke with a fellow cyclist

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COUNTY NEWS

Vintage vehicles head for Himley

HIMLEY Hall and Park will again host its annual Vintage Transport and Country Fair this June.

The free event is set to be bigger and better, running for the weekend of June 2 and 3, 10am to 4pm.

Now in its fifth year, the day has developed from the former Steamer Sunday to a vintage vehicle display and country fair, bringing exhibitors from across the country.

Steam engines, fairground organs, tractors, classic cars, vintage motorbikes, vintage cycles and fire engines will be on display. There will also be stalls, street food and a children's fun-fair. £5 parking charge applies

Society one of the top places to work

DUDLEY Building Society has taken 24th place in the table of best companies to work for in the Midlands. The society, which has its head office in Brierley Hill, got the ranking in The Best Companies to Work For in the Midlands 2018 chart.

It celebrates its 160th anniversary this year and has £400 million of assets. Rank was based on development, 'giving something back', management, leadership, pride and wellbeing. The Dudley's Megan Price said: "We have taken a completely fresh look at our employee engagement and being named a top 25 employer in the Midlands is the icing on the cake."

Angling firm reels in record profits

SPECIALIST fishing tackle and equipment shop chain Angling Direct, which has sites in Willenhall and Halesowen, saw both sales and profits rise to record levels in the year to the end of January.

Group revenue was up 44 per cent to £30.24 million with profits before tax ahead 24 per cent to £1.1m

Online sales were up 54 per cent to £16.1m and shop sales by 40 per cent to £13.2m.

Its shops network has grown to 21.

Marston's interim new chair is taking her seat

SENIOR independent director Carolyn Bradley, former group brand director of Tesco, will become interim chairman of Wolverhampton-based Marston's from the start of June.

She will replace Roger Devlin, who steps down on May 31, while the search for his successor continues.

Mr Devlin will become chairman of housebuilder Persimmon on June 1.

New principal aims to turn academy around

A FAILING school has appointed a new headteacher to turn around its fortunes.

Andy Landers has taken over at Holly Hall Academy, rated 'inadequate' after an Ofsted inspection last year.

He replaces Rob Hatch, who quit the 654-pupil school in January before the release of the inspectors' report.

Holly Hall Academy was taken over

by the Dudley Academies Trust (DAT) last September, with bosses at sponsor Dudley College promising it will be 'an absolutely and utterly changed school' over the next 12 to 18 months.

Mr Landers has been interim principal since January and previously worked at Coseley School and the Hillcrest School.

One of his key tasks will be implementing the DAT's new strategic

plan, which was released this week (see below).

He said: "I'm delighted to be taking up the reins at Holly Hall. I truly believe this is an exciting time for my school and for the trust as a whole. I'm committed to delivering all of the strategic priorities in our new plan, as I believe the young people of Dudley deserve the very best from their education."



New principal Andy Landers

£4.5m is to be spent on school improvements

Report by Pete Madeley

TWO of the worst performing secondary schools in Dudley will be refurbished this summer as part of plans to improve education.

Hillcrest School and Community College and Holly Hall Academy – both rated 'inadequate' following the most recent Ofsted inspections – will see facilities spruced up after the Dudley Academies Trust (DAT) launched its 'blueprint for change'.

They will get a share of £4.5 million, as will Castle High School, rated 'requires improvement', and The High Arcal School, rated 'good'.

The four schools, with a total of 3,515 pupils, have been taken over by the Dudley College-run trust in a bid to drive up educational standards in the borough.

Standards

A new strategic plan has been implemented, which has already seen new staff brought in to drive up standards in English and maths.

The DAT says that a key issue is that the quality of facilities at schools has been 'compromised' in recent years due to a lack of investment. Money from the Education and Skills Funding Agency will be spent on improvements to heating, roofing and glazing.

Trust chief executive Jo Higgins, said there had already been a 'sea change' at the four schools since the DAT was founded six months ago.

Dudley College Principal Lowell Williams said the Trust would create an 'aspirant culture' in the schools. He added: "We have already come a long way but there is an even longer journey to go if we are to give the young people of Dudley the first class education they deserve."



Share of £4.5m to be spend on The Holly Hall Academy, which was rated 'inadequate' by school inspectors



Money will be spent on Hillcrest School in Netherton



Lowell Williams aims to provide 'first class' education

Chamber call for action after scandal of Carillion

THE damning report on the failure of Wolverhampton-based Carillion raises critical concerns around corporate governance, says a Black Country business leader.

Corin Crane, chief executive of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, said it was essential the report was treated with the utmost seriousness and Government responds as a matter of urgency.

He said there must be a genuine change in the corporate governance of big businesses like construction and support services giant Carillion, and those culpable for Carillion's failings should be held to account.

Carillion collapsed at the end January with debts of up to £7 billion, including £2.6bn in pension liabilities.

Rotten

Recently MPs said Carillion's board presided over a 'rotten corporate culture'. Directors were too busy 'stuffing their mouths with gold' to worry about the workers and should face the possibility of disqualification, according to the scathing final report from a joint inquiry of two select committees.

Carillion became a 'corporate time bomb', said the Work and Pensions and Business Select Committees, describing Carillion's rise and fall as 'a story of recklessness, hubris and greed'. The report also called for a potential break-up of the big four audit firms – Deloitte, EY, KPMG, and PwC – after they 'waved through' the indebted construction company's accounts. The report also attacked the Government for lacking 'decisiveness and bravery' to tackle the failures.

Mr Crane said: "Few businesses will be surprised about the damning picture it paints of what was such an important company."

"It raises critical concerns around corporate governance, about the roles of the Financial Reporting Council and Pensions Regulator, and about the longstanding auditors of this business."

He said the chamber had been involved, along with the West Midlands Combined Authority, Wolverhampton Council, Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, Black Country Growth Hub and the Department of Work and Pensions in helping to manage the fallout of the Carillion liquidation through the implementation of an emergency taskforce.

Centre open day

AN open day is being held at Myles Court, Brierley Hill, tomorrow (Friday) for the Daybreak Age UK Dudley day centre at John Street 10am to 4pm. Call (01384) 340608 for details.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

High Street open again next month

A YEAR-LONG roadworks scheme costing millions of pounds is nearing completion.

Pennett High Street is set to re-open early next month as the £6.3 million project aiming to tackle congestion nears its end. The A4101 will open to traffic on June 3 following a series of night-time resurfacing works.

The reopening of High Street follows 12 months of work. Finishing touches to Tansey Green and Corbys Hall Lane will take place early next month.

Resurfacing works will take place from today until tomorrow (Friday), 7.30pm to 5am.

Foster carers to spread the word

FOSTER carers are helping to spread the word about their roles as part of National Foster Care Fortnight.

They will meet the public today (Thursday) at Ladies Walk Centre in Sedgley from 12 to 5pm, and at St Thomas's Church in Stourbridge on Saturday from 1 to 3pm.

Councillor Patrick Harley said: "These sessions give people interested in fostering a chance to have their questions answered. For those who can't make it, our website www.fosteringindudley.org.uk is a great place to find out more."

Paula races back to a key position

PAULA Jones has recently re-joined Wolverhampton Racecourse as commercial manager 20 years after working for the venue in her first role after finishing university.

Paula, who lives in Kinver with her husband, son and daughter, has a background in the leisure industry. She has spent her time away from the racecourse working within Midland football clubs including her beloved Wolves and was most recently at Stoke City. She has also spent time as corporate fundraiser for children's charity Promise Dreams

Suffragette sash sells for £3,400 at auction

AN original 'Votes for Women' suffragette sash sold at a Stourbridge auction house for more than three times its £1,000 valuation.

The sash sold at Fieldings Auctioneers on Saturday for £3,400. The green, white and purple sash emblazoned with the famous slogan was created for the Women's Social and Political Union and is thought to have been made by Birmingham hat and sash firm Toye Kenning and Spencer.

Dishonest gardener is ordered to pay £2,300

A ROGUE gardener from Dudley who made false claims to attract customers on Facebook then carried out poor, unfinished work has been handed a 12-month community order.

James Worsey, who traded as KJGS Gardening Services, admitted being involved in a fraudulent business.

Dudley Council, prosecuting, told the Dudley Magistrates Court on May 9 that two customers, from Quarry Bank and Halesowen, had paid Worsey, of Halesowen Road, to carry out garden improvements after seeing his claims to have satisfied clients. In both cases, he failed to advise of cancellation rights and carried work so poor that it had to be re-done.

In Quarry Bank, he installed a fence which fell over the following day and an artificial lawn, which had to be re-laid.

He also dumped rubbish on a neighbour's garden after charging to remove it and failed to return to complete the job or remedy problems.

In Halesowen he installed another artificial lawn, which was so uneven it had to be re-laid, failed to lay drains properly, charged for a skip he didn't provide and left rubbish on site.

The court imposed a 12-month community order on the 27-year-old with a six-month curfew between the hours of 7.30pm and 7.30am. He was also ordered to pay £1,660 in compensation and £700 costs.

Bootcamp training on trading estate

A FORMER soldier has launched a bootcamp fitness centre on a Stourbridge trading estate.

Commercial property specialist Bulleys sealed the deal with Empire Fitness at the GK Davies Trading Estate on Hayes Lane, Stourbridge.

Rhys Jenkins-Hayhow, owner of Empire Fitness, spent five years in the Queens Royal Hussars, serving in Afghanistan, Germany and Canada as a tank driver, gunner and loader. He has now used his Army experience to establish the bootcamp business.

Mr Jenkins-Hayhow, aged 26, initially launched his fitness bootcamp in a park but unreliable weather made this impractical. He said: "This is ideal and users know that it will be open regardless of the weather."

School band play

HIGH Arcal School Band entertain visitors at Gornal Fun Day next month. The event returns to the Vale Street Recreation Ground in Upper Gornal on Saturday, June 30, as part of the Black Country Festival.

Sculptor Edward shows his metal



Edward Cartwright with one of his works

A SCULPTOR will showcase some never-before-seen artwork inspired by the region's industrial history at a show in the Black Country.

Edward Cartwright, aged 31, from Stourbridge, will bring his self-titled exhibition to The Art Yard in Reddall Hill Road, Cradley Heath.

The show, which runs until Saturday, May 26, features a range of sculptures in steel and glass – two materials central to the region's industrial heritage.

Edward, who has worked alongside JRR Tolkien's acclaimed great

nephew Tim, who is a leading sculptor, said: "I am heavily influenced by the industrial history of the area in manufacturing, steel and glass and my work explores both materials, individually and combined."

Carpenter

"Growing up in this area I have been attracted to industrial processes and materials."

He added: "The show features work made over the course of the last three years, some of which has never been displayed before."

"It's a real range of shapes and forms."

Edward, who combines sculpting with work as a carpenter and metal worker, said: "I'm excited. It's a good opportunity to get something different out there which has been hidden away for the last few years."

"I haven't exhibited at The Art Yard before, I'm really looking forward to it and I hope people come along and find something interesting."

For more information on Edward's work, visit www.arthyedward.co.uk

Leader's pledge to mend pothole-ridden roads

AROUND £1 million will be ploughed into improving crumbling main roads across Dudley over the next 12 months.

Major resurfacing schemes will be carried out on A and B roads across the borough, while potholes will be filled in as part of an improvement programme.

Council leader Patrick Harley has vowed to ensure drivers will notice the difference to the quality of road surfaces, which he says have been neglected for too long.

But it means large roadworks schemes are likely on some of the busiest roads in the borough.

It was revealed earlier this year that a further £164,000 would be put into fixing roads in Dudley, drawn from Department of Transport funding. But after the Conservatives secured a majority on the council following the local elections, Councillor Harley said a much larger investment was planned for the borough's roads with the authority looking to fund the improvements directly.

Investment

He said: "I want to make a difference to the roads infrastructure and do big things on A roads and B roads."

"We need to put hefty investment in for general maintenance and resurfacing. I'm looking to set £1 million aside."

The council leader said improving the state of the borough's roads was among his top priorities for the next 12 months, saying many were desperately in need of repairs.

He added: "I want people in 12 months' time to say the council has made a difference to the road infrastructure. At the moment people can't say that after five years of cut."

The condition of many of the Black Country's main roads has deteriorated significantly following a harsh winter which saw snow fall on the region several times.

Meanwhile, Dudley Council paid out more than £22,000 in compensation between 2014 and 2016 over damaged caused to vehicles by potholes.

Vine celebrates women's rights



Michele Gulliver with her artwork which has been revamped to commemorate 100 years of women's suffrage

A METAL and glass vine climbing the side of an historic building in the West Midlands has been revamped to commemorate 100 years of women having the right to vote.

The original buddleia vine, which was created by artist and jeweller Michele Gulliver for the

2006 International Festival Glass, has been given an update to celebrate women's suffrage.

It has become a feature at the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley. The first design was later updated in 2012 for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, with more vines, flowers and leaves added –

plus a crown, emerging from the new growth.

Michele, from Bromsgrove, has now completed the newest revision placed on a wall at glass cone with additions in the suffragette colours of purple, white and green, provided by glass artist Charlotte Hughes Martin

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Never mind A-team, it's ay we team for burglar

HAVE you seen the video of the neighbourhood watch group in Walsall that sprung into action when a suspected burglar was found climbing over a fence? In scenes likened to an episode of The A-Team, half the estate got involved, using cars to block every conceivable escape route, while about a dozen residents cornered the alleged baddie and held him until the Old Bill arrived.

That's what you call a close-knit community, and just the kind you want to live in. I love it when a plan comes together.

What we don't know yet, is what happened to the fate of the man. Has he been charged? Is he going through the courts? What will his sentence be?

We've all seen these police documentaries where after a long chase, vast use of manpower, maybe a helicopter and a police dog or two, chummy is bundled into the back of the van. And then a voiceover at the end of the programme nonchalantly informs us the hooligan was released without charge, given a suspended sentence or a few hours community service. Let's hope that justice is done.

JEREMY Clarkson recently revealed that in the early days when he was preparing to work on his Grand Tour TV show, his boss advertised for a director. Applications came from all over the world, and for a fortnight a 2ft high pile of CVs sat on his desk.

When it came to drawing up a shortlist, the boss took the top seven-eighths of the pile, and threw them in the bin.

"I don't employ unlucky people," he told his secretary. Really? It's just that he does employ Richard Hammond, who seems to have spent most of the past decade in hospital after crashing various vehicles at high speed. If he's the lucky one, you wouldn't want to swap places with one of the others.

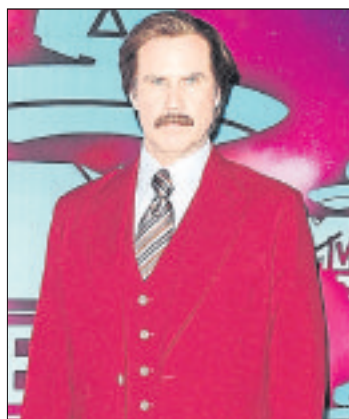
WHEN Oldbury teaching assistant Dawn Paige found her wheeley bin had been tampered with, her first thought was that children were responsible. However, when she examined her CCTV, it appeared to suggest something rather more disturbing – a big cat, maybe a lioness or a leopard. Dudley Zoo keepers appear to agree, but insist that all their big cats are present and correct, and you would hope they know what they're talking about.

It does remind me of the old Tommy Mundon joke, though. A lion escaped from Dudley Zoo, made its way up to Tip-top, but it saw some kids playing in the street and ran away scared.

Will Ferrell ever bring out a movie on Eurovision?



No joy for Jezza in the local elections – but why should this be a consideration?



I've seen the future, of Eurovision, and it's not orange, it's Burgundy, maybe



Trump's America...ticking along nicely despite everything, says a recent visitor

Continuing s-train of costly transport

WITH Peter Rhodes off on his holidays, this week, instead, we have snippets from three of our writers who dared to try and fill the great man's shoes...

ALEX ROSS:

GOOD NEWS! Finally, a review is to be done over rail fares in a bid to stop passengers being ripped off. It will address concerns that travellers 'are being cheated', according to The Times. Cheated is an understatement. Return ticket from Wolverhampton to Stockport – 60 miles – £33. I'm afraid the car keys are still out.

AND why Stockport? My football team, which unleashed another season of pain on me. Alas, a summer free... but no, we have a World Cup, and England are taking part. Pain is relentless.

MOVING on, and AA have this week described the state of Britain's roads as a disgrace. It claims potholes cost motorists at least £1m a month in damages. I'm going to stick my neck out here. Yes, our roads do have potholes. There are more than 250,000 miles of road in this country. Let's face it, it would be impossible to keep on top of and continually repair/replace every stretch of road impacted. Can't we all just slow down, look at the road ahead and take care?

LEIGH SANDERS:

WHAT a great day for Wolves fans with that promotion parade on Bank Holiday Monday. The weather, the numbers on the streets, the atmosphere. What did make me laugh was the

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



national press arriving and trying to join in the party. One colleague pointed out one outlet had written about 'amber and black' being out in force. Didn't realise Barnet fans were there too.

NATIONAL news reports on the day of the local councils vote annoyed me greatly. One commentator announced 'neither Jeremy Corbyn nor Theresa May really made any gains'. But surely this is not the point. National and regional/local politics are two completely different beasts and should be treated as such, otherwise we will never break the chain of national political point scoring and tomfoolery and actually get local councillors who can achieve something.

POTHOLES. Yes, dreaded potholes. I've already had to fork out £183 in 2018 on two damaged tyres and a buckled wheel thanks to the damned things. And reading the letters page in this paper I am not the only one. Still, nice to see the council has the cash for 'pop-up gardens' in Wolverhampton though.

AH, Eurovision. As well as being the eccentric escape of a continent from everyday stress it is still as much fun now watching the absolutely politically neutral voting part, ahem, as it was

when I was a child. Plus, this year we found out Hollywood star Will Ferrell, through his Swedish wife, is a huge fan. He is apparently thinking about making a movie on the spectacle. I think we can all agree Ron Burgundy competing for the Swedes would be a barrel of laughs.

KEITH HARRISON:

I'M just back from Trump's America, where I expected to find the place in rack and ruin, given what a terrible and beastly President he is (copyright all media everywhere). Strangely, the streets were clean, the shops buzzed, traffic moved and there were friendly police everywhere. I couldn't find any of those 'Make America Great Again' hats... but it seems to be doing OK (copyright no media anywhere).

IN terms of The Donald, I did see quite a few middle-aged women in 'Resist' T-shirts. 'Resist' what exactly? Democracy?

WE were also taken aback by huge digital roadside billboards advertising the waiting times in local hospital A&E departments. The longest we saw was nine – yes, NINE – minutes. Worth remembering when we lecture other countries about our glorious National Health Service.

IF you're offended by that (and I know criticism of the NHS is verboten) and fancy beating me up, bear in mind that 61 Staffordshire A&E patients waited for 12 HOURS in March. Therefore, it could be quicker for me to fly to New York and be treated there than in the local hospital I can see from my bedroom window.

TALKING POINT



Sporting chance needed for all tastes

AN enforced absence from work left me at the mercy of daytime television. So thank goodness for the radio.

A head in a book with the radio on was how I best chose to spend my recovery period. And when I was fit enough to at least 'potter' about again, the radio was once more my ideal companion.

I was grateful though to sit through days of Commonwealth Games coverage, which beat any of the drivel that usually fills our screens during the day.

While media outlets like to have us believe that football – the Premier League at least – is the be all and end all of the sporting world, it was great to see different sports being given extensive coverage. Squash, badminton, swimming, gymnastics, even netball. I was engrossed in them all.

The dedication of these athletes, the sportsmanship and competitiveness was plain for all to see. And these are not exclusive sports. They are ones that anyone can play or get involved in at little cost. Sometimes these sports need to be brought to the nation's attention to realise there is a life outside of football, and the attitude of the newspapers, radio and television that think the public is only interested in what is going on at Old Trafford, Stamford Bridge and the likes.

And you just know that when it comes to awards at the end of the year, some of these gold medal winning athletes will be overlooked, despite their achievements, in favour of some bigger name from a more popular pastime.

The Games, and the Olympics before them, have put a number of so-called minority sports on the map, but sadly it is only on such big occasions when they are given a platform.

Hopefully, when the Games come to Birmingham in 2022, The Second City can put on as good a show as our Aussie hosts on the Gold Coast did this year. Secondly, we can only hope the coverage will be just as extensive – on terrestrial TV and not truncated by adverts.

The BBC has lost the rights to many top sporting events in recent years, with Wimbledon, the Boat Race and the FA Cup Final among the few remaining big events covered. The Grand National and Royal Ascot, F1 and Test cricket have all fallen by the wayside. Now even Test Match Special has been lost.

Who knows what could happen in the next four years, or two when the Olympics come around again. But I'd like to be reassured that these so-called minor sports will continue to fill valuable airtime.

MARK SHIPP

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Leaving politics with a clean conscience

THE election results of May 3 were a crushing blow for UKIP and for me personally.

For four years Dudley UKIP councillors have worked extremely hard to not only help the people of our area with individual problems but also to try to change the way our borough was run and to make changes we felt would be beneficial.

Whilst I was focussed more on the political aspects our other councillors were heavily engaged in community work and truly living up to the image

of a real community councillor.

The election results were not just politically painful but personally disappointing for all of us after investing so much of our heart and soul into it.

I am first and foremost a believer that the will of the people expressed through the ballot box is what really matters and that will has been made crystal clear.

I shall not be trying to return to local politics and will see out my term as an MEP working as hard as ever to press for real independence for our nation from the EU.

I want to personally thank the people of Sedgley for the opportunity they gave me to represent them and wish them and all of the people of Dudley borough the very best.

I gave it my best shot and I always stood by what I thought was right for the people and the area I represented.

I leave local politics with a clear conscience. The pantomime of Dudley Council will now carry on without its favourite villain

BILL ETHERIDGE
Dudley

We should not beg for crumbs

I ALWAYS read and enjoy the Peter Rhodes column in The Chronicle and most of the time find myself in agreement with his often pithy comments.

I am particularly attracted to the comments on the Brexit 'wreckers' and their efforts to defeat the democratically declared will of the electorate.

He refers to 'a cabal of the rich, powerful self-important plotters'.

To this I would add also that the cabals (plural) also comprise a substantial number of those with strong vested interests in this country remaining tied to Brussels - at great cost to this nation.

Since the EU needs us and our trade rather more than we do them and theirs, why is our Government 'begging' for crumbs from the EU table when we should be dictating terms.

BARRY WHEELER
Halesowen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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Madness on road – riders seen with no helmet or lights

YESTERDAY, we saw a motorcycle ridden by a girl with no crash helmet (with a pillion passenger, with no helmet either), a motorised tricycle with three passengers, and a trailer, again no helmets.

Then coming home from Tipton, we saw two motor cyclists doing wheelies, without helmets or lights on their bikes along Tipton Road passing the Black Country Living Museum. At 9.30pm!

What do they think about? If they have brains.

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

Staggering indictment of bosses

'TOO busy stuffing their mouths with gold' - what a staggering indictment of directors of a company responsible for billions of pounds worth of Government contracts.

Carillion, one of the country's biggest contractors, was run by a bunch of incompetent greedy men but again 'lessons have been learnt' and again the directors ride off into the sunset with their saddle bags full of the workers' cash. No doubt they will soon be sitting on their yachts partying with the Longbridge four and, of course, Sir Philip Green.

You bet lessons have been learnt. The next bunch won't be caught out in such a naive manner. But that is not likely to pacify the public.

The truth is that half of Britain's industry is run by fools and most of our politicians went to school with them. It's just one big club.

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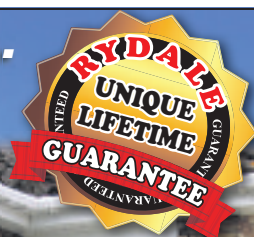
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Dive in for half term fun time

YOUNGSTERS of all ages will be able to take part in fun and games at the Crystal Leisure Centre during the Whitsun break.

The council-owned facility in Bell Street, in Stourbridge, will host a week of fun activities from May 26-June 3.

The swimming pool, complete with slides, waves, bubble seat and rapids, is open between 9am-6pm Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm Saturdays and 8am-6pm Sundays. There will also be a bondi-beat water disco with a live DJ on June 1, 3.30-6pm.

Children aged seven and under can crawl, step or run their way around the soft play suite throughout the week.

Metro bringing investors to Dudley's town centre

THE Midland Metro's extension into Dudley town centre has attracted a 'raft of new investors', council bosses have revealed.

Dudley Council's deputy chief executive Alan Lunt said potential investors had shown an interest in the town centre since it was revealed the tram line would be extending to Dudley.

Work on the £200 million extension is due to start next year and it is hoped it will be ready

in time for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022.

Mr Lunt was speaking on an expert panel put together to talk in front of more than 100 people from businesses across the region. Officials were invited to a special DY5 breakfast meeting on 'Connecting the West Midlands'.

Mr Lunt said: "We think the Wednesday to Brierley Hill Metro extension will be transformative for Dudley. We have seen a raft of new investors come forward,

wanting to invest in Dudley town centre. This is just one of many positive knock-on effects bringing the Metro to Dudley will unlock."

In another boost, the long-awaited redevelopment of Dudley bus station has also taken a step forward with plans finally being submitted. The plans have been lodged with Dudley Council by Transport for West Midlands. It will also link to a major retail development planned for the Cavendish House office block site.

Overhaul due as trams rebranded

THE Midland Metro is to be re-branded by the region's combined authority when it takes over the running of the service next month. The tram service will be known as West Midlands Metro from June 24.

Transport for West Midlands, part of the West Midlands Combined Authority, is taking over the service from National Express.

The change will mean a major re-branding job on trams and at stations. It comes ahead of a £200 million extension, which will see the Metro reach new parts of the Black Country.

It operates now between Wolverhampton and Birmingham but the expansion will take it from Wednesbury to Tipton, Merry Hill shopping centre and Dudley centre.

Ex-engineer mayor to build new links



New Mayor Councillor Alan Taylor and his wife Winifred

FORMER engineer Councillor Alan Taylor is looking forward to forging new community links in his role as Mayor of Dudley.

Councillor Taylor, who has represented Halesowen South ward for 14 years, served as deputy mayor in 2017/18 and took over the role of Mayor on Thursday. Councillor Taylor, and his wife of more than 60 years Winifred, will be the borough's first citizens.

He trained as an engineer in the fastener industry, before moving into the trailer industry.

He served as a councillor on Halesowen Borough Council in the 1970s. They have three daughters and four grandchildren.

Councillor Taylor has chosen three local charities to support during his year in office, one based in his home town of Halesowen. They are Headway Black Country, specialising in supporting people with an acquired brain injury; White House Cancer Support which supports people with cancer, their families and friends; and The Hope Centre, Halesowen, a charity with a Christian ethos which provides practical and emotional support.

Councillor Taylor said: "It's a real honour to be chosen to serve as Mayor and it's a role Win and I feel privileged to take on."

Business chiefs in call for Brexit clarity

BUSINESS leaders in the Black Country have called for immediate clarity on the Government's Brexit plans.

A Brexit Group formed by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) said there needed to be clear answers about future trading relationships and conditions for businesses so firms could be confident about the future.

A letter with eight key Brexit demands has been sent to the Government, which has been asked to 'clarify your expectations of future trading relationships and trading conditions, allowing businesses the ability to plan for a successful future'.

The group, which consulted more than 20 business leaders in the region, also criticised Theresa May's plan to take Britain out of the customs union, insisting there needed to be a 'smooth customs arrangement' with the EU if businesses in the region are to thrive after Brexit.

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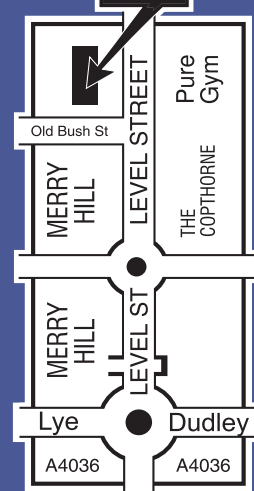
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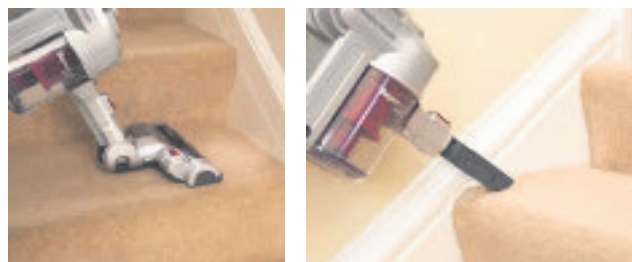
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New laws needed to combat online abuse

THE Government's digital minister, Stourbridge MP Margot James, has revealed she received abuse online and reported it to the police.

It comes as the Government announced new laws will be introduced to tackle the internet's 'wild west' in a bid to make Britain the 'safest place in the world' to be online. Many female MPs have reported receiving abuse online, and Tory MP Ms James was asked about her own experiences.

Speaking to host Sophy Ridge on Sky's Ridge On Sunday, Ms James said: "I would like to comment just generally though because I conducted a round table of women Parliamentarians earlier this year and, like you, I was completely horrified by what I've heard."

"It's not just Parliamentarians, it's any woman in public life, and some of our famous broadcasters have had the most terrible abuse online, which is completely unacceptable. If it's not illegal it should be and I think some of it is."

"I feel very strongly that it shouldn't be up to the taxpayer to fund all of the mechanisms by which this content is removed, which is currently the case, it should be up to the platforms themselves. There is sufficient artificial intelligence available for them to make a huge impression on this and the fact that most of them don't is highly irresponsible, which is why we intend to bring in legislation to control it."

Attempt to block extradition has failed

A POLISH man accused of plotting with his brother to kidnap a British model in Italy has lost a High Court bid to block his extradition.

Michal Herba, aged 37, who was arrested in the Black Country, is alleged to have helped Lukasz Herba, 30, with the kidnap of 20-year-old Chloe Ayling in July.

Both men deny any wrongdoing and Michal Herba challenged his extradition to Italy, where he faces trial.

His lawyers argued the European arrest warrant issued by the Italian authorities was 'wholly deficient' because it had only stated that he was 'complicit' in the alleged kidnap without further details of his role.

But his appeal was dismissed by two senior judges, who ruled the warrant was 'adequate'.

Drugged

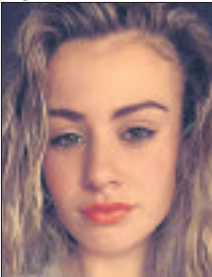
Italian prosecutors say Ms Ayling was lured to Milan for a fake photoshoot before being drugged, handcuffed and bundled into a suitcase at the start of a six-day ordeal.

The model, from Coulsdon, Surrey, was allegedly driven 120 miles to a remote farmhouse near Turin and a ransom of 300,000 Euros was demanded.

Lukasz Herba was arrested at the British consulate in Milan after driving Ms Ayling there on July 17.

Michal was arrested by the National Crime Agency in Tivdale in August and his extradition ordered in September.

Italian police allege the



Model Chloe Ayling

brothers are part of a group calling itself Black Death, which is active on the dark web selling women as sex slaves to buyers in the Middle East.

But the brothers claim they are not guilty of any crime and say they were involved in a 'publicity stunt' for Ms Ayling's benefit.

Speaking after the hearing, Michal Herba's barrister George Hepburne Scott said: "We are carefully considering the judgment with our client and will be deciding whether to apply to appeal to the Supreme Court."

Disability support

WEST Midlands Police has been honoured by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). It is the first metropolitan police force to be recognised for supporting staff with disabilities. The force has been named as a disability confident leader by the DWP Head of diversity and inclusion, Anthony Burnett, said: "The award of disability leader status is a great achievement for the force."



PDSA veterinary nurses will be offering free health checks for dog in various Dudley borough locations

Free health checks for dogs¹³ as pet charity goes on tour

A PET charity is planning to offer free health MOTs for dogs in Dudley borough.

The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) is bringing its Pet-Wise Tour to Dudley next week with the aim of helping keep canines in tip-top condition.

This year's tour is supported by the players of the People's Postcode Lottery and will travel across the UK providing free health checks and pet care advice.

A veterinary nurse will be on board one of the charity's PetCheck vehicles which will visit the Brockmoor Community Centre in Pennsnett Road from 1pm to 5pm on

Tuesday, Priory Park near the hub building at Priory Road, from 10am to 5pm on Wednesday and Gornal Recreation Ground in Vale Street from 10am to 5pm on Friday, June 1.

The vehicle will also visit Huntingtree Park in Halesowen from 10am to 5pm on June 1.

Veterinary Nurse Kaya Hawrylak will perform the dog checks. These will include an assessment of diet, behaviour and health.

Additional services including nail clipping, ear cleaning and micro-chipping which will also be available free of charge, although donations are welcomed.

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Tighter leash on dogs in tower blocks

DUDLEY Council bosses have opted against a ban on pet dogs being allowed in the borough's high-rise blocks, despite a majority of consulted tenants wanting dogs kept out of flats.

The number of dogs in high-rise blocks in Dudley borough will be 'reasonably controlled' in a bid to limit noise nuisance.

Dudley Council is aiming to cut anti-social behaviour incidents and disputes in flats involving dogs.

A consultation of tenants found more than two-thirds were in favour of banning dogs from high rises in the borough. But the authority has instead decided to control the numbers and educate owners on their responsibilities. It adds up to a tougher approach on dog owners, following reports of 'nuisance or aggression' towards tenants and council staff.

The council will aim to ensure 'that the number of dogs in any block of flats is reasonably controlled'.

Mothercare to axe 50 stores but Merry Hill branch spared

MOTHERCARE stores in Walsall and Stafford are set to close in the next 12 months under a plan that will see 50 underperforming branches axed nationwide.

But the retailer's Merry Hill store is one of those being saved as part of a rescue plan.

The two store closures will involve around 30 of the 800 jobs that will be lost through a rescue deal called a company voluntary arrangement (CVA).

If Mothercare's creditors give the CVA the green light it will allow the business to close loss-making shops and secure rent cuts at other branches.

The company is not officially identifying

Report by Simon Penfold

which stores are set for closure, although staff have been told. The details were in a leaked document circulated among Mothercare's creditors.

The branch on Walsall's Crown Wharf Retail Park is listed for closure, along with the shop at the Queen's Retail Park in Stafford.

The document also reveals that other local branches, at Merry Hill shopping centre, Telford, Solihull and Tamworth, are secure.

Mothercare currently employs about 3,000 people across 137 outlets in the UK. It will cut that number of outlets to 78 initially, and then to 72 by 2022.

In a statement last week Mothercare said: "We regret having to close stores and the impact this will have on colleagues. However, we had no alternative to executing a CVA."

"The business was in an unsustainable situation and was in clear need of an appropriate resolution and today's comprehensive measures provide a renewed and stable financial structure for the business, and will allow Mothercare to accelerate its adaptation to the shifting dynamic towards online."

Mark Newton Jones, who was given the elbow as chief executive last month, will return to once again take the top job. The man brought in to replace him, David Wood, will now become managing director.

Dudley to get its own beach this summer



Designer Rachel Lane starts spreading the world about new attraction Ow Bin Ya Sands, coming to the zoo this weekend

A SEASIDE atmosphere is being created for visitors to Dudley Zoo despite the attraction's landlocked location.

'Ow Bin Ya Sands' is set to open in time for the May half term holiday complete with buckets and spades, two giant deckchairs, three seaside photo boards and plenty of picnic tables.

The zoo's Sensory Garden at the top of the site is currently being transformed into a beach play area which will stay in place for the whole summer.

A total of 80 tonnes of sand is being piled into a large wooden frame, measuring almost 50ft by 30ft, so youngsters can make play and make sandcastles when taking a break from seeing the animals.

Dudley Zoo's marketing manager, Andrea Hales, said the beach will give visitors 'something fun and different to enjoy'.

Ow Bin Ya Sands will open on Saturday. For more information visit the zoo website.

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Bowlers with blindfolds get Beacon insight

A VISUALLY-IMPAIRED tenpin bowling team have shown others what it is like to bowl when blind.

The team from the Beacon Centre took on a sighted team, who all wore blacked out goggles to stimulate being blind, during a friendly game to raise awareness.

Beacon's team have played teams up and down the country winning a host of trophies including the 2016 national championship.

The challenge was the idea of team captain Ranjit Boprai who wanted staff at Tenpin Dudley and the Beacon Centre to experience what it would be like to

play blind. The 53-year-old from Wolverhampton said: "I have been playing for the past four years and throughout this time Tenpin Dudley has always supported us."

"Without their kind backing we could not have highlighted the importance of the sport and life beyond sight loss."

Players are guided with verbal instructions by a sighted volunteer.

Arwyn Jones, chief executive officer at the Beacon Centre, added: "This was an amazing experience."

The match was won by the Beacon Centre's visually impaired team.

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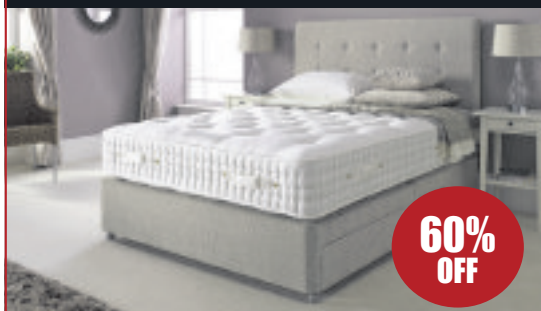
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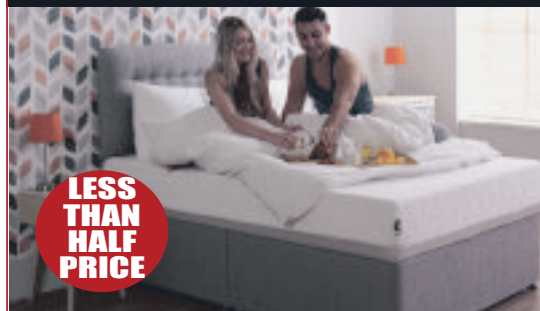
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16Team-mates in special cup final tribute to Ryan

TEAM-MATES and friends of an amateur footballer from Stourbridge who died after being stabbed in a nightclub paid an emotional tribute ahead of a cup final clash.

Players and officials from Wrens Nest FC came together to remember Ryan Passey before their West Midlands Regional League Cup final against Shropshire side St Martins FC.

Both sides took part in a minute's silence before dozens of orange balloons marked with the words 'Ryan 4 ever' were let off in tribute before

the game, which St Martins went on to win 5-3.

Ryan, aged 24, died after an incident on the dancefloor at the former Stourbridge nightclub Chicago's last August. He used to play in midfield for Wrens Nest.

Friend and teammate Lee Salt, who was there on the night Ryan lost his life, said carrying out the tribute made the team feel 'proud'.

Ahead of the game the 22-year-old from Blackheath let off a number four balloon in tribute – the number that Ryan used to wear for the club.



Lee Salt and Wrens Nest players and officials get ready to release balloons in tribute to Ryan Passey

Dragon boat racers beat drum for causes

CROWDS turned out to enjoy an boat race with a difference as competitors took to the water at Himley to raise funds for charity.

The sun was shining and the competition fierce as Dragon Boat Racing returned to Himley Hall in Dudley for its 18th consecutive year on Sunday.

Eighteen teams battled it out on The Great Pool in a bid to help good causes across the region – including Compton Care, the Beacon Centre for the Blind, the Wolverhampton MS Therapy Centre and Sedgley Scorpions FC.

Mike Boyce, chairman of the Dragon Boat Committee at Wolverhampton Rotary Club, said: "We had a record number of people watching it, which the weather helped. It is a really good family day out. We get these long boats and we have up to 16 paddlers who sit in twos."

"All of the teams are invited to get sponsorship for charity. Half of the money that a boat raises goes to the team's chosen charity and the other half goes to the Rotary Club of Wolverhampton Charitable Trust."

Report by Luke Bartlett

"It does take an awful lot of setting up. We will be having our first meeting for the 2019 event in the next two or three weeks. Himley have already got it in their diary for next year."

The 350-yard race has raised £360,000 over the years.

Leading up to the main race the Cappemini team were crowned winners of the minor final, with Jonahs Arc bagging fastest team of the day. But Hawkes Home Improvements won the main event, trailed closely by Peter Posh Formal Suit Hire and Jonahs Arc.



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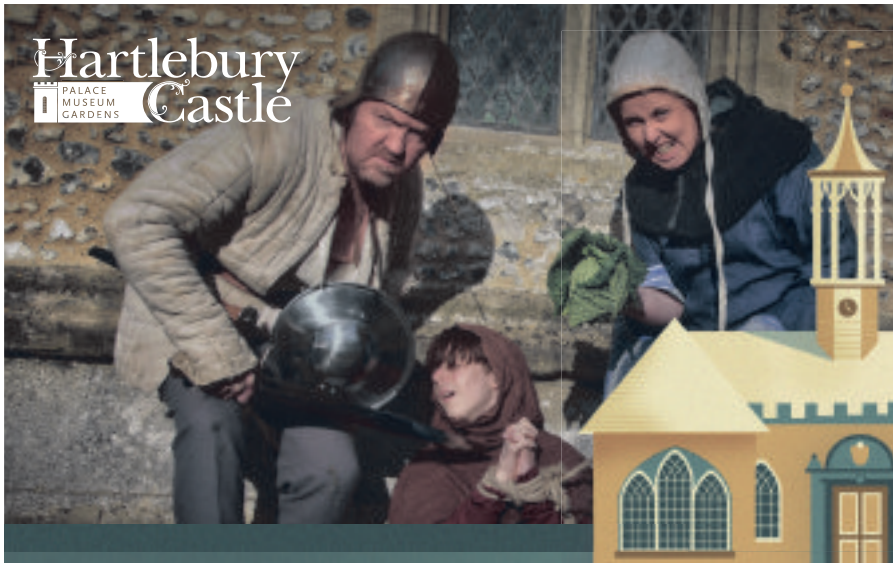
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Get into the swing with charity golf day

A RECRUITMENT firm is inviting companies to help raise £3,000 for a hospice through its annual golf event. Workforce Staffing, which has branches in Dudley and Kidderminster, is hosting its event at Blackwell Golf Club on July 6. Golfers will raise funds for Primrose Hospice in Bromsgrove – a charity which needs almost £2 million each year to operate its care services. It offers support to patients who have been diagnosed with life limiting illnesses and their families, including children, through their Day Hospice and Family Support services. The cost for a team of four is £400 with golfers set for a variety of prizes, including for the longest drive. Joe Alekna, managing director for Workforce Staffing, said: "Our golf day always attracts brilliant support from kind-hearted individuals and local businesses who want to help us raise funds for a wonderful cause." To take part email clarkson@weareworkforce.co.uk or call 01527 509000.



Thick plumes of smoke billow up from the fire in Brierley Hill. Picture: Wayne Shakespeare

Thick smoke billows into sky above factory yard

A BLAZE in Brierley Hill sent plumes of smoke billowing into the sky across the Black Country. Thick black smoke was spotted on the horizon three miles away from the fire raging in Hawbush. Around 30 firefighters from Brierley Hill, Haden Cross, Stourbridge, Tipton, Dudley and Bilston fire stations tackled the blaze in a factory yard off Bull Street. Flames ripped through 12 bales of cardboard and wood, say West Midlands Fire Service. Crews were called to the scene at around 1.10pm on Thursday (May 17). Firefighters worked to stop the spread of flames to neighbouring warehouses, using water pumped from the nearby canal to douse the flames. Barmaid Becky Wright, of The New Wellington pub, in nearby Bretell Lane, said staff had heard a loud bang. "We did see a lot of black smoke all of a sudden," she said. Staff from Hawbush Primary School said the school had been unaffected but black smoke had been seen overhead. Bystanders saw flames burst from behind factory buildings as smoke rose. Flames affected an area of 165 square feet.



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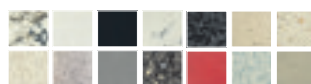
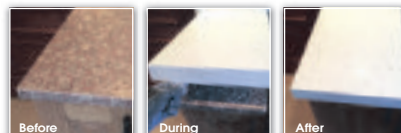


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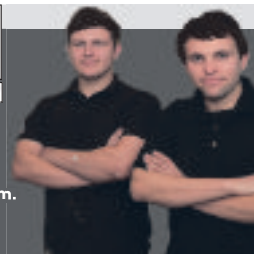


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First driver is jailed in car cruise crackdown

A DRIVER from the West Midlands has become the first motorist to be jailed for breaching a region-wide injunction banning 'car cruising'.

West Midlands Police caught Atif Qasim, from Alum Rock, Birmingham, racing at breakneck speeds in the city.

Police dash-cam footage caught the moment VW Golf driver Qasim flew over an island on the A47 Heartlands Parkway near Star City at more than 90mph while racing a BMW through the streets.

Officers lying in wait on the evening of March 25 as part of Operation Hercules – the force's response to tackling street racers – gave pursuit and quickly pulled over 20-year-old Qasim and BMW driver Sajad Hussain, 27.

Arrested

Both were arrested and charged with breaching the High Court order, which outlaws street racing and wider anti-social behaviour such as riding in convoy, performing stunts, or revving engines, blaring horns and playing loud music at vehicle gatherings.

The legislation is in place throughout Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country.

Hussain, of Bordesley Green, Birmingham, admitted the offence at court on April 9 and received a suspended jail sentence.

However, Qasim failed to turn up at court but was eventually rearrested later that month after officers tracked him down through known associates.

When he appeared at Birmingham Magistrates Court on May 8, he was sent straight to prison to start a seven-month sentence and ordered to pay £726 in court costs.

Birmingham police sergeant Martin Williams said: "Several drivers have been arrested and put before the courts in recent weeks for breaching the injunction. They were given suspended jail sentences – which means if they are caught again they will likely end up behind bars – but this is the first case of a driver being handed an immediate term of imprisonment."

"It should act as a stark warning to any motorist who thinks they can drive dangerously or anti-socially on our streets with impunity."

Deaf support service creates helpful card

A GROUP in Dudley are celebrating the launch of a new communication card to assist deaf people.

The Deaf Focus Group who regularly use Dudley's Sign Cafe have been working with other partners to look at the issues affecting members of the deaf community. They have been working with Health Watch Dudley, Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group, Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust and Dudley Council's deaf support service.

The group felt the deaf community would benefit from a quick and simple way to inform people of their communication needs, in particular health and social care professionals so they could ensure the right support was in place.

The working group came up with the design for a simple business card which informs people that the user is deaf or hearing impaired. The card will be available from Queen's Cross Network, in Wellington Road, Dudley – home to Dudley Council's deaf support service. FCall (01384) 813462.

Fly-tipper fined £1,100 for creating this mess

A FLY-TIPPER who was caught on camera dumping rubbish has been fined more than £1,000, in one of four successful prosecutions of litterbugs by Dudley Council.

Dennis Rose, aged 51, was filmed dumping the rubbish on land off Bowling Green Road, in Netherton, last July.

Documents relating to his address were found in the waste. After failing to respond to letters and a fixed penalty notice, Rose was prosecuted for illegally depositing waste.

Rose, of Brook Lane, Cradley, was fined £1,100 – and also ordered to pay costs of £295, £150 compensation and a victim surcharge of £110 – in his absence at Dudley Magistrates Court on May 9.

Meanwhile, Robert Jones, 75, of Spring Road, Netherton, was also fined £220 after he admitted to failing to ensure waste was disposed of properly. He was also ordered to pay £200 in costs, £150 compensation and a £20 victim surcharge.

Bags

A number of household waste bags had been dumped in undergrowth, on land off Springfield Avenue, in August with documents addressed to Jones found in two of the bags.

In mitigation, the court heard Jones had paid a man in a van to remove the waste, however he failed to make necessary checks and that is why he accepted responsibility for the offence.

Also dealt with by the court was 35-year-old Amos Price, of Heydon Road, Pensnett, who pleaded guilty to illegally depositing waste and was fined £500 and ordered to pay costs of £295, with a £50 victim surcharge.



This rubbish left on land off Bowling Green Road led to a court appearance

Last August he had been hired by Summerfield Commercials Ltd to remove waste, but Price, who was not a registered waste carrier, claimed he had then sold the van and its contents on.

The waste, including empty oil containers, plastic petrol, cans and contaminated oily rags, was found dumped in Mullett Park, in Pensnett. Summerfield Commercials Ltd, of

Worcester Road, in Kidderminster, also pleaded guilty to failing in its duty of care to ensure controlled waste was disposed of properly and ordered to pay £295 costs and £215 in compensation.

Dudley Council leader, Councillor Patrick Harley, said: "These prosecutions send out a stark warning that we will not tolerate this anti-social behaviour."

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Saturday, May 19



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Cotswolds Moreton in the Marsh & Bourton on the Water..... £13 or 2 £24

Thurs 11th July
Mystery Meal Tour Day out???
with a Stop for Lunch!!!!..... £22

Saturday 21st July
Wellsbourne Market & Stratford Upon Avon?
Fish & Chips Tea!!..... £20

Saturday 21st July
Blackpool Sand Sea Pier & Tower
A great day out for all (f/s £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Sunday 22nd July
Blackpool Sand Sea Pier & Tower
A great day out for the family..... £16 £15 £10

Monday 23rd July
City Of Bath Stunning Architecture, Great Shopping, Iconic Attractions..... £16

Tues 24th July
Oswestry Market & the Iron Works
Shopping, Sightseeing..... £13 or 2 £25

Weds 25th July
Elan Valley Dams & Leominster
great scenic day out!!!!..... £16 or 2 £30

Thurs 26th July
Torquay or Paignton
Enjoy a day in the English Riviera!..... £22 £20 £16

Thur 26th July
Harry Potter Studio Tour Includes Admission
“The Secrets Revealed”..... £65 £65 £60

Saturday 28th July
Blackpool Sand Sea Pier & Tower
A great day out for all (f/s £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Sunday 29th July
Weston Super Mare Sand, Sea & Pier
Great day out for the family..... £16 £15 £10

Sun 29th July
Althorpe House & Gardens
Princess Diana's Resting Place..... £35 £32 £28

Mon 30th July
Rhyl Or Llandudno Sand, Sea
A great day out for all (f/s £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Tues 31st July
Abergavenny Market & Hereford Shopping,
Sightseeing, Cathedral..... £16 or 2 £30

Weds 1st Aug
Cathedrals & Sand City of Wells (Market Day)
& Weston Super Mare..... £16

Tues 2nd August
Mystery Meal Tour Day out???
with a Stop for Lunch!!!!..... £22

Fri 3rd Aug
Lake Windermere, Including Boat Cruise
& Free time in Bowness..... £30 £30 £22

Saturday 4th Aug
Blackpool Sand Sea Pier & Tower
A great day out for all (f/s £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Sat 4th Aug
Royal Windsor Castle, Sightseeing,
Shopping something for you all..... £20 £18 £16

Sunday 5th Aug
Heartbeat Country, Aidenfield & Whitby
Tour Scenic Delight..... £26 £25 £20

Sunday 5th Aug
Weston Super Mare Sand, Sea & Pier
A great day out for the family..... £16 £15 £10

Tues 7th Aug
Snowdonia Tour Llangollen, Bets?
Coed, Llanberis Pass Llandudno..... £20 £18 £16

Weds 8th Aug
Seaside Mystery??
By the Seaside by the Sea?????..... £16 or 2 £30

Thurs 9th Aug
Mumbles via the Gower Coast
& free time in Swansea Midweek Special!!..... £18

Fri 10th Aug
Shrewsbury Flower Show
More Than Just a Flower Show!!!!..... £35 £34 £15

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Barry Island Sand, Sea, Funfair,
Home to Gavin & Stacey (f/s £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Sun 12th Aug
Blackpool Sand Sea Pier & Tower &
FREE AIRSHOW (f/s £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Sunday 12th Aug
Weston Super Mare Sand, Sea & Pier
Great day out for the family..... £16 £15 £10

Sun 12th Aug
Manchester Ship Canal Salford Quays to Liverpool,
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Mon 13th Aug
Chester, Cheshire Oaks or Chester Zoo
(admission not included)..... £18 £16 £13

Tues 14th Aug
Cotswolds Moreton in the Marsh & Bourton on the Water..... £13 or 2 £24

Weds 15th Aug
Highgrove Gardens, Guided Tour,
Home to Prince Charles & Camilla..... £49

Weds 15th Aug
Weymouth Carnival,
A great day out for all the family..... £22 £20 £16

Fri 17th Aug
Plum Tour Pershore, Evesham,
Plum Orchard Guided Tour!..... £16 or 2 £30

Fri 17th Aug
West Midland Safari Park
Includes Tour & Admission Family Day!..... £20 £18 £17

Saturday 18th Aug
Blackpool Sand Sea Pier & Tower
A great day out for all (f/s £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Sat 18th Aug
Barmouth-Best Sandy Beaches in Wales!!
A great day for all!..... £18 £16 £13

Sunday 19th Aug
Weston Super Mare Sand, Sea & Pier
Great day out for the family..... £16 £15 £10

Sunday 19th Aug
Call The Midwife Guided Tour
with Fish & Chips for Lunch..... £55

Sun 19th Aug
Buckingham Palace State Rooms
“A Royal Outing for you all”..... £42 £42 £32

Mon 20th August
Chesterfield Market & Matlock Bath
Shopping & Sightseeing..... £16 or 2 £30

Weds 22nd Aug
Terracotta Army “Warriors in Liverpool”
Includes Admission..... £33 £32 £21

Weds 22nd Aug
Liverpool City Of Culture, Sightseeing,
Shopping, Albert Docks..... £18 £16 £13

Wed 22nd Aug
Tewkesbury Market & Carvery
on the way home Shopping and Tea in one!..... £20

Thurs 23rd Aug
Llangollen, Horseshoe pass
and Llandudno MIDWEEK SAVER..... £15

Saturday 25th Aug
Blackpool Sand Sea Pier & Tower
A great day out for all (f/s £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Sat 25th Aug
Cardiff Harbour Festival Shoreside
Entertainment for all the family..... £18 £16 £13

Sat 25th Aug
Southport Sand, Sea & Fun Fair
A great family day out (family/saver £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Sunday 26th Aug
Weston Super Mare Sand, Sea & Pier
Great day out for the family..... £16 £15 £10

Sun 26th Aug
Bank Holiday Mystery??
Great Day out for all (North South East or West)..... £16

Mon 27th Aug
Barry Island Sand, Sea, Funfair,
Home to Gavin & Stacey (f/s £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Mon 27th Aug
Llandudno Victorian Seaside Town,
Sand Sea & Pier (family saver £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Mon 27th Aug
Blackpool Sand, Sea and Piers
A Great Day out for All (family/saver £55)..... £18 £16 £13

Tues 28th Aug
Llangollen Steam Railway & Cream Tea,
Scenic Delights of Wales..... £35 £33 £25

Weds 29th Aug
Downton Abbey House and Gardens
Tour (Highlee Castle)..... £30 £30 £30

Thurs 30th Aug
Bournemouth Sand, Sea, Pier,
Town & Free Airshow!! Fun for All..... £22 £20 £16

Fri 31st Aug
Harry Potter Studio Tour Includes Admission
“The Secrets Revealed”..... £65 £65 £60

Sat 1st Sept
Blackpool Illuminations
“Back to School Special” (Tour 1 hour max)..... £16 or 2 £30

Sat 1st Sept
Coronation Street The Tour & Free Time
Salford Quays/Manchester..... £55 £55 £55

Sat 1st Sept
Coronation Street The Tour & Free Time
Salford Quays/Manchester..... £55 £55 £55

Sunday 2nd Sept
Weston Super Mare Sand, Sea & Pier
Great day out for the family..... £16 £15 £10

Weds 5th Sept
Mystery Meal Tour Day out???
with a Stop for Lunch!!!!..... £22

Sat 8th Sept
Wellsbourne Market & Stratford Upon Avon
“grab a bargain”..... £12 or 2 £20

Sun 9th Sept
Snowdon Mountain Railway
Mountain Top Adventure 2 1/2 Hour Experience..... £40

Tues 11th Sept
Cotswolds Moreton in the Marsh -
Broadway for a Cream Tea..... £16 or 2 £30

Fri 14th Sept
Portmeirion Guided Tour & Woodland Land Train,
Village, Shops & Café..... £30

Sat 15th Sept
Liverpool City Of Culture, Sightseeing,
Shopping, Albert Docks..... £18 £16 £13

Mon 17th Sept
Bakewell Market Home of the
Bakewell Tart great produce!!..... £16 or 2 £30

Tues 18th Sept
Hereford via Malvern Hills &
Hop pocket Craft Centre..... £13 or 2 £25

Weds 19th Sept
Royal Mint Experience See the other
side to the coins in your pocket!..... £30 £28 £28

Sat 22nd Sept
Blackpool Illuminations Sand, Sea & Piers
(Tour lights 1 hour Max)..... £20 £18 £16

Sat 22nd Sept
Coronation Street The Tour & Free Time
Salford Quays/Manchester..... £55 £55 £55

Weds 26th Sept
Autumn Colours in the Vale of Evesham
With Tour Guide..... £16 or 2 £30

Thur 27th Sept
Snowdonia Tour Llangollen, Bets?
Coed, Llanberis Pass Llandudno..... £20 £18 £16

Sun 30th Sept
Emmerdale Studio Experience & free time
in Leeds A Great day out!!..... £42 £40 £40

Sun 30th Sept
Malvern Autumn Show Stalls, Animals,
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HARRY & MEGHAN

Hair stylist reveals Duchess was 'calm and chatty' before wedding

The Duchess of Sussex was a calm and chatty bride with no signs of nerves on her wedding morning, according to her hair stylist. Serge Normant said it was "dreamy" to work with Meghan, creating a bun that was "messy in a controlled way". Describing her demeanour on Saturday morning, he said: "She was calm, yeah. Chatty, absolutely. We were definitely having exchanges, yeah for sure. She was very happy. It was a beautiful morning, just the perfect morning to get married." Asked if she had shown any signs of nerves, the Paris-born hairdresser said: "No, I don't think so, she was just very happy, very happy, very excited."

Mr Normant, who flew from his New York base especially to style Meghan's hair, said he had spoken with the newly-married couple after the wedding, describing Meghan as "thrilled" and Harry as "fantastic". He said: "She was thrilled, yeah she was very happy." On Harry, he added: "He's Prince Harry, he's fantastic."

The Queen was seen being driven back to Windsor Castle soon after the morning service at the Royal Chapel of All Saints in Windsor Great Park had finished. As a few Windsor Farm shop regulars watched on.

Meghan dons Diana's ring



Harry gave his wife a poignant gift – an emerald-cut aquamarine ring that belonged to his mother, Diana

It was a touching gesture that showed Harry's mother was never far from his thoughts.

The new Duke of Sussex gave his wife a poignant wedding-day gift – an emerald-cut aquamarine ring that belonged to Diana, Princess of Wales. The ring was designed and made in 1997 by Asprey.

Princess Diana was pictured wearing the ring at a private viewing of the Christie's auction of her dresses in 1997. Unlike Meghan, who wears it alone, Diana wore it with a diamond

Report by David Banner
newsdesk@expressandstar.co.uk

eternity band. She was also pictured wearing it with a matching bracelet during a visit to Sydney in 1996.

The bracelet features a larger emerald-cut aquamarine, clasped between six rows of pearls.

The gift was another way for the Duke to involve his mother in the couple's celebrations.

Ms Markle's engagement ring features two diamonds taken from jewellery that belonged to Diana. They

flank the central stone, which was sourced from Botswana.

The Prince designed the engagement ring himself and had it made by court jeweller Cleave and Company.

When the couple got engaged, he said incorporating Diana's diamonds was his way to make sure "she's with us on this crazy journey".

Ms Markle's wedding gown was quite unlike the voluminous puffed-sleeved style worn by Diana. But the Duchess' evening dress drew comparisons to the late Princess.

Charles' 70th birthday celebrations on the agenda for newlyweds

It was back to business for the Royal Family this week.

The official royal Twitter account released a statement, saying: "Thank you to everyone who came to Windsor and those who followed from around the UK, the Commonwealth, and the world today. "Congratulations once again to the newly-married Duke and Duchess of Sussex. #royalwedding." The celebrations culminated

in a black-tie wedding dinner staged at Frogmore House and hosted by Charles for 200 of the couple's closest friends and family. But Meghan has spoken of her desire to "hit the ground running" as she becomes a royal and there will be no immediate honeymoon.

On Tuesday the couple joined Charles and Camilla on the lawns of Buckingham Palace for a Prince of

Wales 70th Birthday Patronage Celebration. The outdoor event marked the heir to the throne's milestone birthday, which falls in November, by recognising Charles' patronages and military affiliations as well as others involved in charities supported by the royal. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, the couple will remain in the UK for a period before taking the traditional post-wedding break.

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The happy newlyweds Prince Harry and Meghan Markle rode through Windsor to greet the thousands



Thousands greeted Harry and Meghan on Long Walk



Music played while the carriage snaked through London



Harry and Megan changed into more comfortable clothing once the official ceremony and tour had ended



Crowds camped out for the chance to see the couple



Media at the Hart and Garter Hotel for the wedding

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The next chapter starts in love tale

Report by Shirley Tart
newsdesk@expressandstar.co.uk

Word is that they met in the time honoured way – on a blind date. With Meghan getting a report back from a friend who had met Prince Harry.

And according to one of those in the know, after Meghan had listened to a list of princely attributes, charity work, Army achievements, royal duties and so on, all delivered admirably, she simply asked: "Yes but is he nice?"

Just a few words but they spoke volumes. And now we know. Because it seemed according to some, not much more than one momentous year since love came in and got their world spinning, clearly Harry was more than nice enough for the lady who has just become his wife.

And so, a new day has dawned for a thoroughly nice and very much in-love prince and his stunning bride.

Ever since we first saw them out and about as a couple there seemed no real doubt that this was a relationship which mattered.

Since then the whirlwind romance has been front page day after day.



The loved up pair



Perton Academy held their very own mock wedding



Olga Groves, 90, at Bush Home, Darlaston



Jacqui Ryan, Everyl Geddes and Julie Harding in William Green Road

Party time on the streets

Report by Luke Bartlett
luke.bartlett@expressandstar.co.uk

ROYAL fever gripped our region as Prince Harry sealed his fairytale romance to Meghan Markle on Saturday.

From village green get-togethers in the Staffordshire sun to an afternoon tea party at a Black Country care home, people from all over took part in the celebrations.

Among those involved with the Royal Wedding celebrations was Naomi Williams, of Wednesbury, whose fiancée, Gary Harding, was on duty in Windsor with the Irish Guards at the wedding. Ms Williams was back home enjoying a street party in William Green Road, Wednesbury, where residents met up to celebrate – waving flags and toasting the couple's special day.

Wolverhampton's Berrybrook Primary School held their own mock wedding between Head Boy and Head Girl, while over in Hixon, near Stafford, volunteers enjoyed watching the big day during an outdoor party on the village green. Abbey Lodge care home in Wolverhampton saw 100-year-old Doris Sully and Jean Spencer, aged 94, enjoy the occasion. Almost 100 people also turned up to a street party organised by David Austwick, aged 67, and his wife Valerie in Fancourt Avenue, Penn, Wolverhampton, on Saturday.



Naomi Williams, of Wednesbury, celebrates. Her fiancée, Gary Harding, was on duty in Windsor with the Irish Guards

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Light Up for return of indie superstars

Indie superstars Snow Patrol return with their first album in seven years, released tomorrow (Friday).

Wildness finds the band searching for clarity, connection, and meaning, while staying true to the melodic songwriting prowess that brought them to prominence.

It taps into something raw and primitive and lead-singer and songwriter Gary Lightbody is happy to be back.

"There are many types of wildness, but I think it can be distilled into two: the wildness of the modern age, all it's confusion, illogic and alienation and a more ancient wildness. Something primal, alive and beautiful that speaks to our true connectivity, our passion, our love, our communion with nature and each other. This is the kind of wildness the album is centered around. The loss of it. Trying to reconnect with it. To remember it."

Since their 1998 debut, Songs for Polarbears, Snow Patrol have racked up an impressive number of critical and commercial accolades, including 15 million global album sales, one billion global track streams, five UK platinum albums, and are Grammy, Brit Award and Mercury Music Prize nominated.

After their Fallen Empires tour ended in 2012, band members Gary multi-instrumentalist Johnny McDaid, guitarist Nathan Connolly, bassist Paul Wilson, and drummer Jonny Quinn decided to take a step back from the band, and focus on their own projects.

Gary continued his work with his Tired Pony side project with members of Belle and Sebastian, R.E.M., Reindeer Section and Fresh Young Fellows and moved to Los Angeles to begin writing songs for movies (including "This Is How You Walk On" for 2017's Gifted), and doing a number of high-profile co-writes with Ed Sheeran, Taylor Swift, Biffy Clyro and One Direction. Taking an extended break from Snow Patrol proved to be a source of inspiration, and writing songs that were not pulled directly from his own psyche helped heal what Lightbody considered to be not so much writer's block as life block.

CLARITY

It was in that search for clarity and connection that the songs were written and refined. "I think it's the first record I've ever written that I haven't just asked a bunch of questions."

"I actually tried to figure out why I was unhappy, why I feel out of place, why I'm afraid," says Gary.

"There's nothing really to protect myself from - it's all in the album. I want to remember." This impulse was partially inspired by Lightbody's father, who is suffering from dementia. "I think the album is defined by memory in a lot of ways," says Gary, "including my father's loss of memory."

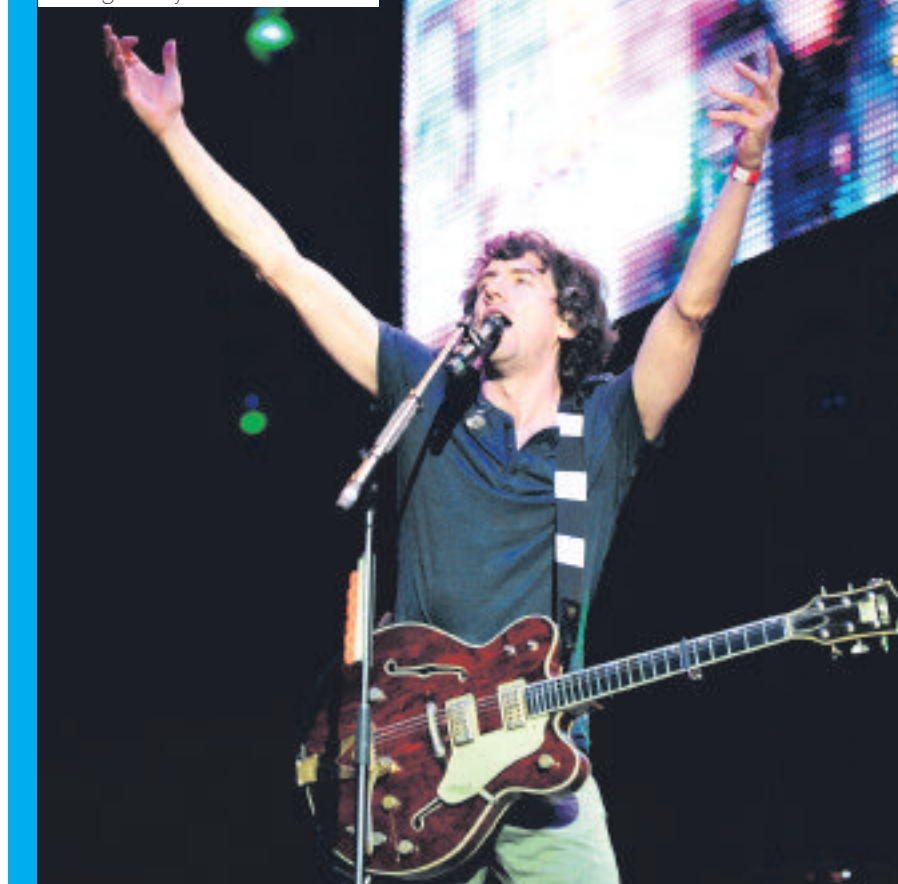
Guitarist Nathan adds: "We finished touring Fallen Empires and did our last festival in 2013 and we decided at that stage that we needed to take a break. We had been going for 10 years non-stop. It was a great 10 years but we'd been together longer and it was hard. It was record, tour, record, tour and we were away a long time."

"A couple of years ago we decided to get back at it. Wildness wasn't a difficult album to make once we were in there. I know Gary had a little writers' block and he had stuff going on and depression, which he's been open about, and alcohol, which is for him to speak about. There were distractions for want of a better word, good and bad, to keep us away from the band. But last year was when we decided it was 100% in the right head space. We were excited and keen. I never thought we wouldn't get back together but we didn't know it would be five years."

"We weren't sipping cocktails on a beach. The longer it takes to make a record the better it has to be when you are coming back. We wanted it to be the best record we could make and it's way beyond what we'd hoped for."

The songs on Wildness are surefooted, displaying a newfound sense of self and purpose, and the rest of the band members rose magnificently to the occasion. The album is produced once more by the great Jackknife Lee, Snow Patrol's longtime producer and collaborator. Life on Earth opens the album with its mission statement, "this

Gary Lightbody of Snow Patrol on stage in Hyde Park in 2012.



is something else, this is something else." Heal Me feels like an ancient hymn: "Finally, after way too many years of smashing my body to bits with booze, I met someone who helped me find my way back to health and clarity," says Gary. "This song is about her, that journey and is dedicated to her."

Empress, written for Gary's goddaughters, is fierce and heartfelt, with runaway drums and keen words of wisdom. What If This Is All The Love You Ever Get" is a heartstring-puller, posing the question nobody wants to ask.

The last track, Life and Death, is a rumination, and a human story of love and forgiveness - mostly self-forgiveness for Gary, demonstrating that perhaps everyone ought to take this long between albums to reflect before they write.

"Seamus Heaney, my favourite poet of all time, said at 71 that he was only discovering what some of his poetry means, and this is coming from a Nobel Prize-winning poet. It's a great testament to inspiration," says Gary. "Sometimes it takes you five years to write the thing. Like now. And you know for sure when you finish an album like that, where you've poured over every detail and put every atom of yourself into it, everything makes sense and I bet you I'm never not proud of this record."

Wildness has given Snow Patrol the chance to reconnect with their fans and move forward after five years away.

Nathan adds: "It's good to be back. We were always in touch. We're family. We're brothers, so it wasn't like we didn't see each other at all, quite the opposite."

*It's good to be
back. We were
always in touch.
We're family*

"It's great to be able to do that outside of the band because that's our connection, that's who we are. We were all supportive of each other's activities."

"The record and the band kind of happens naturally, which is the best thing. At some point, somebody, usually Gary, has some songs he's comfortable or excited about and we all get back together."

Snow Patrol play BBC's Biggest Weekend in Coventry on Sunday.

Andy Richardson

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

Stomp cast in action



You can't beat Stomp, it's got the rhythm of life

THE UNSTOPPABLE smash-hit Stomp is back at Birmingham's Hippodrome from Tuesday until June 2.

Stomp takes familiar objects like newspapers, bins, plastic bags and even the kitchen sink and uses them to create a universal language of rhythm and movement that's exploding with energy.

Stomp has been touring the globe for 27 years with more than 30,000 performances to more than 15 million people in 53 countries. There are four Stomp companies performing at any one time, in New York and on tour in Europe, America and currently in Australia.

Hippodrome spokeswoman Kate Evans says: "It's fresher, faster and funnier than ever. From its humble

beginnings in Brighton in 1991, Stomp has grown into a global phenomenon that will set your toes tapping and your pulse racing. Stomp combines dance, comedy and music into an experience like no other."

Stomp creator Luke Cresswell says: "I think Stomp brings out the drummer in all of us. Rhythm is a language that we use everyday without ever realising. Stomp reminds us of that. Another strong aspect of the show is humour – these two elements can be a very compelling combination."

Co-creator and co-director Steve McNicholas adds: "The performers bring their own personalities to the show. So as the cast changes over the years, so does the show. They all devise their own solos, all create their own costumes, so the show changes organically."

Daughter keeps Drifters legacy alive



A LEGENDARY soul group are drifting back out on tour with a new show performing classic hits from the last six decades.

More than 60 dates have been announced for The Drifters in 2018 to celebrate 65 years in the business, including one night only at Dudley Town Hall tomorrow (Friday).

Now in their 65th year but, unsurprisingly, without any original members The Drifters are on the road with a line-up hand-picked by Tina Treadwell, pictured, president of the Treadwell Entertainment

Group and owner of The Drifters name.

Tina's father George started the group with Clyde McPhatter and brought in several greats such as Johnny Moore and Ben E King.

Her mother Faye was later responsible for bringing the group to the UK and overseeing hits such as You're More Than a Number in My Little Red Book and Kissin' In The Back Row of the Movies. After her parents died, it was down to Tina to continue the legacy of The Drifters name.

Tina, who previously worked for Disney as an executive producer and casting director, believes this

current line-up is one of the best to date and looks forward to the upcoming concert tour. She said: "I am very excited that now in our 65th anniversary year we have a new show for the fans who we invite to join us in celebrating this incredible and everlasting story of The Drifters."

The group has been inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame after an incredible list of hits including Saturday Night At The Movies, Come On Over To My Place, Stand By Me, Under The Boardwalk, There Goes My First Love and many more.

Hart to Hart star in play with heart

Hollywood actress Stephanie Powers, pictured, will star alongside British actor Clive Francis when the stage version of poignant romance 84 Charing Cross Road comes to Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre next week. Based on Helene Hanff's novel, turned into a 1987 film, it is based on the true story about the correspondence between a New York writer and a London bookseller. Ms Powers is best known for playing Jennifer Hart in US detective series Hart to Hart.



Liverpool legends play on despite footy

Liverpool legends Echo and the Bunnymen headline Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Saturday, after some 'will they won't they' over the gig clashing with Liverpool's appearance in the Champions League final. The concert will feature reworkings of some of their classic songs, since they formed on Merseyside in the late 1970s. Canadian collective Broken Social Scene are returning to the UK on tour this summer, including a concert at Birmingham O2 Academy next Thursday (May 31). Last summer they released their fifth album Hug of Thunder, their first in several years. There is a feast of blues at the Robin 2 in Bilston with the Chris Bevington Organisation launching their new album tonight (Thursday) at a double header with Big Wolf Band. Then Ian Parker and his band play next Wednesday and King King on Thursday.

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COMMERCIAL FEATURE



A TASTE OF ITALY IN STOURBRIDGE

It was a sunny Friday afternoon in the town of Stourbridge so I decided to stop for some lunch. I stumbled across Vesuvio Italian Restaurant located down Victoria Passage, which turned out to be a hidden gem.

On arrival at the restaurant we had to go up 2 flights of stairs which takes you into a bright newly refurbished restaurant. All the tables were laid out to a high standard. The restaurant was quite busy for a Friday afternoon.

Once I was seated by the waitress Hazel Aure, I was presented with a menu full of Italian specialities including Seafood, Pizza and various Pasta dishes including some of the Italian favourites Spaghetti Bolognese and Lasagne.


The restaurant was offering a Friday - Saturday dinner special where you can choose 3 courses for £19.95 and various offers from Tuesday to Sunday lunch and dinner. Vesuvios also offer a cocktail menu offering various cocktails from Bellini, Mojito to a Cosmopolitan whilst also offering Non - Alcoholic cocktails. The Wine list is pretty impressive too!!


I opted for Penne Vesuvio as a starter which consisted of Penne pasta with Chorizo, garlic tossed in a chilli tomato sauce. The dish was presented very well and the flavours all complemented each other. After experiencing a first class starter it made me even more excited for me to receive my main meal which I ordered Agnello Al Porto which was 3

lamb chops on a bed of mash served in a rich port and rosemary sauce complemented with a side of fresh vegetables. The lamb was cooked to perfection and was so tender and succulent.

To finish this fantastic experience off I decided to go for dessert which I selected the Cheese Cake Lemoncello.

Every meal that was presented was presented to a very high standard the service was exceptional and the ambience of the restaurant made this experience an experience worth having. I would have no qualms about recommending this restaurant. The owners, management and all the staff ticked every box and I cannot wait to visit this restaurant again.

CHOICE	BBC1	BBC2	ITV	CHANNEL 4	CHANNEL 5	DIGITAL
<div><p>Hugh Grant</p><p>A Very English Scandal (BBC1, 9pm)</p><p>Jeremy draws one step closer to his goal of becoming prime minister, but his success is threatened by the return of Norman, demanding that he keep the promises he made. With his political career on the line, Jeremy is determined to do whatever it takes to keep his former lover quiet, a situation complicated by Peter having left for California. Jeremy finds the pressure mounting - leading to a disastrous incident when shots are fired. Hugh Grant and Ben Whishaw star in Russell T Davies fact-based drama.</p></div>	<div><p>6.00 Breakfast. 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 10.00 The Big Questions. 11.00 Regional Programme. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) 2.15 Escape to the Country. (R) 3.15 Britain's Best Home Cook. (R) 4.10 Points of View. 4.25 Songs of Praise. 5.05 The Coronation. Documentary about the Queen's coronation in 1953, featuring an interview with the monarch, who shares her memories and discusses seeing her father crowned when she was 11. (R)</p><p>6.05 BBC News.</p><p>6.20 Regional Programme.</p><p>6.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker presents the show from the Queen's Windsor estate, exploring the grounds in a horse-drawn carriage and discovering tales of the monarch's first visit as a young princess. Adam Henson reports on the livestock breeding on the estate's farms. Anita Rani finds out about a breed of horse saved from extinction, and John Craven investigates a tree-planting scheme. Plus, Sean Fletcher reports from the Royal Welsh Show.</p><p>7.30 Taylor Swift & Paloma Faith at the Biggest Weekend. Alex Jones and Nick Grimshaw present the show live from Singleton Park, Swansea, where Taylor Swift will be performing a preview of her forthcoming world tour. Plus highlights of Paloma Faith's set in Coventry, featuring songs from her fourth album The Architect.</p><p>9.00 A Very English Scandal. Jeremy draws one step closer to becoming prime minister, but his success is threatened by the return of Norman, demanding that he keep the promises he made.</p><p>10.00 BBC News.</p><p>10.20 Regional Programme.</p><p>10.30 Imagine – Orhan Pamuk: A Strange Mind. The novelist introduces Alan Yentob to his home city of Istanbul, and reveals how the city's distinctive blend of ancient and modern culture have shaped his own work.</p><p>11.35 Film: The Ides of March. (2011) A presidential campaign worker must decide where his loyalties lie as dark secrets come to light. Drama, directed by and starring George Clooney.</p><p>1.10 Weather for the Week Ahead. 1.15 BBC News.</p></div>	<div><p>6.35 Coast. (R) 7.35 Glorious Gardens from Above. (R) 8.20 Countryfile Spring Special. (R) 9.15 The Beechgrove Garden. 9.45 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. 11.15 Spring Kitchen with Tom Kerridge. (R) 12.00 NW200 Highlights. 1.00 Athletics: Diamond League Eugene Highlights. 2.00 The Sinking of the Laconia. (R) 3.30 Flog It! (R) 4.30 The Biggest Weekend Live.</p><p>6.00 Golf: PGA Championship. Eilidh Barbour presents highlights of the final day of the European Tour's flagship event from Wentworth in Surrey. The famous West Course always seems to throw up some last-round drama, especially in 2014 when Rory McIlroy came from seven shots behind with a closing round of 66 to finish one stroke clear of Shane Lowry. With commentary by Peter Alliss, Ken Brown and Andrew Cotter.</p><p>7.00 Million Pound Menu. Fred Sirieix welcomes another two street-food brands to Manchester, where the owners pitch their businesses to high-street investors in the hope of opening their own restaurants. Up this week are Finca, a Cuban street-food brand whose founders Oli, Joe and Michael are looking to secure £150,000 to open in their home town of Liverpool. Meanwhile, former waitress Chelsea Campbell hopes to tap into the increasing number of adults eating less meat with her vegan junk-food idea Wholesome Junkies. (R)</p><p>8.00 Steve Backshall v the Monster Mountain. Steve attempts to climb the north face of the Eiger, braving ice-covered cliffs, blinding blizzards and a dangerous storm front. (R)</p><p>9.00 Florence and the Machine at the Biggest Weekend. The band led by Florence Welch take to the main stage at Singleton Park in Swansea, performing songs from their back catalogue alongside material from upcoming album High as Hope.</p><p>10.00 Liam Gallagher at the Biggest Weekend. The singer performs on the main stage at Coventry's War Memorial Park, playing songs from his debut solo album as well as classic Oasis anthems.</p><p>11.30 International Rugby Union.</p><p>12.30 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) 1.30 Holly City. (R) 2.30 This Is BBC Two.</p></div>	<div><p>6.00 CITV: Sooty. 6.10 Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) 6.20 Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.45 Super 4. (R) 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 7.00 The Oddbods Show. (R) 7.05 Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) 7.30 Teen Titans Go! (R) 7.45 Adventure Time. (R) 8.00 The Haunted Hathaways. (R) 8.25 ITV News. 8.30 Zoe Ball on Sunday. 9.25 Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury. (R) 10.00 Peston on Sunday. 11.00 Britain's Got Talent. (R) 12.15 Britain's Got More Talent. (R) 1.15 ITV News: Weather. 1.25 Countrywise. (R) 1.55 Ninja Warrior UK. (R) 3.00 Tenable. (R) 4.00 Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. (R) 5.00 The Chase Celebrity Special. (R)</p><p>6.00 Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule. Madcap panel show presented by the comedian, with Charlie Brooks, Chizzy Akudolu, Lolly Adefope and Carol Vorderman tasked with saving Earth from any potential alien invasion. (R)</p><p>6.30 ITV News: Weather.</p><p>6.45 Regional Programme: Weather.</p><p>7.00 Little Big Shots. Dawn French hosts a variety show featuring some of the world's most talented children, including a young opera singer, a circus strongman, a group of soul singers and Spain's biggest pop stars under four foot tall. Last in the series.</p><p>8.00 The London Palladium: The Greatest Stage on Earth. Bradley Walsh presents a documentary about the famous theatre, meeting some of the stars who have trod its boards, discovering the backstage secrets of its history, and uncovering archive footage of classic performances, including a long-lost recording of Morecambe and Wise. Featuring contributions from Stephen Fry, Sheila Hancock, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Beverley Knight and Philip Schofield.</p><p>10.00 ITV News: Weather.</p><p>10.20 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with Allegra Stratton. (R)</p><p>11.20 Sunday Night at the Palladium. Jason Manford introduces the variety show, featuring Will Young performing his single Love Revolution, comedy from Joe Lycett and a duet between David Gray and LeAnn Rimes. (R)</p><p>12.10 Great Art. (R) 1.00 Jackpot247. 3.00 Motorsport UK. (R) 3.50 ITV Nightscreen.</p></div>	<div><p>6.10 Motor Sport: Caterham. 6.40 Eat the Week. (R) 7.35 Frasier. (R) 8.00 Frasier. (R) 8.30 Frasier. (R) 8.55 Bake Off: The Professionals. (R) 10.00 Sunday Brunch. 1.00 Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Live Build Up. Build-up to the sixth round of the season at Circuit de Monaco. 1.45 Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Live. Coverage of the sixth round of the season at Circuit de Monaco (Start-time 2.10pm). 4.30 Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Live Reaction. Reaction from the sixth round of the season at Circuit de Monaco. 5.30 Grand Designs. (R)</p><p>6.30 Channel 4 News.</p><p>7.00 Escape to the Chateau. Dick and Angel return to continue their renovation adventures in France. Two-and-a-half years have passed since the couple swapped their flat in Southend for a 19th-century chateau in France costing only £280,000, and in that time, the pair have worked to transform the derelict property into a fairytale castle. However, around half of the 45 are yet to receive adequate attention, the couple's fledgling events business demands attention, and the outbuildings are still in need of conversion. (R)</p><p>8.00 Bake Off: The Professionals. Cherish Finden and Benoit Blin challenge the bakers to prepare two batches of perfectly uniform miniature classics, before turning a classic omelette into a masterpiece.</p><p>9.00 The Handmaid's Tale. Emily reflects on her past as she works in the colonies, recalling her life as an academic before the rise of Gilead, and the events that led her to realise the danger to come. She tries to flee the country, but when her marriage is forcibly annulled, she finds family torn apart. In the present, she encounters a new arrival in the colonies, whose presence stirs up tension and mistrust. Offered adjusts to a new way of life as she hides out in a place with a grisly history. Marisa Tomei guest stars.</p><p>10.10 Film: The Hunger Games: Catching Fire. (2013) The victor in a televised battle to the death returns to the arena to face other past champions. Sci-fi adventure sequel, starring Jennifer Lawrence and Liam Hemsworth.</p><p>12.55 Film: The Family. (2013) 2.55 Best Laid Plans. (R) 3.50 My Kitchen Rules. (R) 4.45 Shipping Wars UK. (R)</p></div>	<div><p>6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. 6.10 Wissper. (R) 6.20 Poppy Cat. (R) 6.30 Milkshake! Monkey. (R) 6.35 The Secret Life of Purples. (R) 6.40 Moly. (R) 6.45 Oily the Little White Van. (R) 6.50 Peppa Pig. (R) 7.00 Paw Patrol. (R) 7.10 Thomas & Friends. (R) 7.25 Fireman Sam. (R) 7.40 Rusty Rivets. 7.55 Paw Patrol. (R) 8.10 Nella the Princess Knight. (R) 8.25 Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) 8.45 Flodders. (R) 8.55 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) 9.05 Shimmer and Shine. (R) 9.25 Digby Dragon. (R) 9.40 Peppa Pig. (R) 9.50 Peppa Pig. (R) 9.55 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) 10.30 Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud 2. (R) 10.55 Police Interceptors. (R) 11.50 Police Interceptors. (R) 12.50 Film: Five Children and It. (2004) Children's fantasy, with Kenneth Branagh. 1.50 Access. 1.55 Film: Five Children and It. (2004) Concluded. 2.35 Film: Madeline. (1998) Children's comedy, with Hatty Jones and Frances McDormand. 3.35 Access. 3.40 Film: Madeline. (1998) Concluded. 4.25 Film: The Parent Trap. (1998) Comedy remake starring Lindsay Lohan. 5.25 Access. 5.30 Film: The Parent Trap. (1998) Concluded.</p><p>6.55 5 News Weekend.</p><p>7.00 Cricket on 5. England v Pakistan. Action from the fourth day of the First Test in the two-match series, which took place at Lord's.</p><p>8.00 Agatha Christie's Crooked House. Adaptation of the mystery novel, starring Max Irons and Terence Stamp. Charles, the son of the assistant commissioner at Scotland Yard returns to London from Cairo following the end of the Second World War, only to discover his fiancée's grandfather has been murdered. He uses his father's connections to become involved in the investigation, and finds the dead man's second wife a likely suspect. However, nobody in the household has an alibi, and Charles' fiancée may have the clearest motive for murder. (R)</p><p>10.05 Top of the Box 1989 with Matthew Kelly. The presenter takes a look back at the most popular TV from 1989, including Bread, Only Fools and Horses, The Bill, 'Allo 'Allo!, Birds of a Feather, Neighbours and Byker Grove.</p><p>11.50 Best of Bad TV: The 80s. (R)</p><p>1.10 Football on 5: League 1 Play-Off Final. 1.40 SuperCasino. 3.10 The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe: Affairs & Heartbreak. (R) 4.40 House Doctor. (R)</p></div>	<div><p>BBC Four</p><p>7.00 The Biggest Weekend 8.30 How to Build a Jumbo Jet Engine 9.30 Locomotion: Dan Snow's History of Railways 10.30 Jonathan Meades on Jargon 11.30 Amazon Abyss 12.30 Civilisations Stories: Innovation and Inspiration in Birmingham 1.00 How to Build a Jumbo Jet Engine 2.00 Locomotion: Dan Snow's History of Railways 3.00 Jonathan Meades on Jargon 4.00 Close</p><p>ITV2</p><p>12.30 You've Been Framed! Gold 1.35 Film: The Flintstones (1994) 2.40 FYI Daily 2.45 Film: The Flintstones (1994) 3.20 Britain's Got Talent 4.35 Britain's Got More Talent Live 5.40 Film: Jurassic World (2015) 6.45 FYI Daily 6.50 Film: Jurassic World (2015) 7.00 The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) 9.10 FYI Daily 9.15 Film: The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) 10.45 Family Guy 12.10 American Dad! 1.10 The Cleveland Show 1.35 Through the Keyhole 2.30 Teleshopping</p><p>ITV3</p><p>11.40 A Touch of Frost 6.00 Agatha Christie's Poirot 8.00 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs 9.00 Joanna Lumley's Japan 10.00 Cilla 11.00 Wire in the Blood 1.00 Blue Murder 2.20 Liverpool 3.15 Road to Avonlea 5.05 George and Mildred 5.35 ITV3 Nightscreen</p><p>ITV4</p><p>9.00 Film: The Enforcer (1976) 10.00 FYI Daily 10.05 Film: The Enforcer (1976) 11.05 Film: Sudden Death (1995) 12.05 FYI Daily 12.10 Film: Sudden Death (1995) 1.15 Fifth Gear 2.15 The Protectors 2.45 ITV4 Nightscreen 3.00 Teleshopping</p><p>E4</p><p>11.20 The Goldbergs 1.20 Brooklyn Nine-Nine 1.50 Young Sheldon 2.20 Film: The Core (2003) 5.00 The Big Bang Theory 9.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 10.00 The Inbetweeners: Their Favourites 12.15 The Big Bang Theory 1.10 Tattoo Fixers 2.15 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 3.05 Black-ish 3.30 Hollywoods</p><p>Film4</p><p>11.00 The Rugrats Movie (1999) 1.00 The Rugrats in Paris: The Movie (2000) 2.35 Tooth Fairy (2010) 4.40 We Bought a Zoo (2011) 7.05 Crocodile Dundee (1986) 9.00 Spy (2015) A deskbound CIA agent goes into action for the first time to battle an arms dealer and avert a global disaster. Comedy adventure, with Melissa McCarthy and Jason Statham. 11.20 Odd Thomas (2013) 1.10 Dressed to Kill (1980) 3.20 Close</p></div>



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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Rush Hour, ITV, 10.20pm

A Hong Kong detective is sent to Los Angeles to investigate a kidnapping, but the local authorities worry that his presence in America might spark an international incident, and assign a loud-mouthed and troublesome cop to keep an eye on him. However, the new partnership proves an explosive combination. Comedy adventure, starring Jackie Chan, Chris Tucker, Ken Leung and Tom Wilkinson. (1998)

TUESDAY

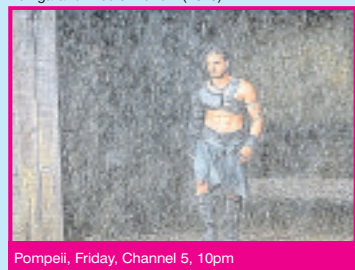
A Woman Deceived, Channel 5, 3.20pm

A wealthy young widow marries the man who organised the event at which her husband was killed, and for a while her life seems perfect - until financial concerns begin to create tension. Thriller, starring Ashley Scott, Jay Pickett, David DeLuise and Brian Krause. (2017)

WEDNESDAY

Abducted Love, Channel 5, 3.15pm

After her husband is abducted on his way to work, Ann Bradshaw and her teenage daughter Casey find themselves in danger when they help the police investigate the kidnapping. Thriller, starring Daphne Zuniga and Nicole Munoz. (2016)



Pompeii, Friday, Channel 5, 10pm

THURSDAY

Rio Conchos, BBC2, 12.45pm

A shipment of rifles is stolen by a former Confederate general in the aftermath of the American Civil War, and he begins selling them to hostile Apaches. A cavalry major is assigned to bring back the weapons, aided by a mismatched band including one of his fellow officers, a duplicitous Mexican and a drunken former rebel. Western, starring Richard Boone and Stuart Whitman. (1964)

FRIDAY

Pompeii, Channel 5, 10pm

A gladiator in the ancient Roman city falls in love with the daughter of a wealthy merchant, who is being forced into marriage with a corrupt senator. When the nearby volcano Vesuvius erupts, he fights to save her and escape the destruction of the city. Disaster movie, starring Kit Harington. (2014)

New adaptation looks far from a tragic affair

Even at 80, the Oscar winner and all-round acting legend Anthony Hopkins can still disappear into a role.

Richard Eyre, who has directed this new adaptation of Shakespeare's King Lear, reveals that while they were filming on location, a member of the public mistook Hopkins for a homeless man.

Eyre told Digital Spy: "A woman in a mobility scooter rode up to Tony, and said, 'You know, there's a hostel up the road... so you might want to take your shopping trolley down there.'"

But while Hopkins may have been unrecognisable, there are plenty of very familiar faces among the cast.

Of course, that shouldn't really come as a surprise. When it comes to bringing Shakespeare to the screen, the BBC has pulled off some real coups.

But King Lear is arguably the most impressive yet, giving viewers three Oscar winners for the price of one - as well as Hopkins in the title role, it

also stars Emma Thompson as his daughter Goneril and Jim Broadbent as Gloucester.

They head a cast that also includes recent Hamlet Andrew Scott, Emily Watson, Florence Pugh, Jim Carter, John Macmillan, Jim Carter, Christopher Eccleston, Tobias Menzies and Karl Johnson.

Executive producers Colin Callender and Sonia Friedman credit Eyre with assembling such an incredible collection of actors, but the play itself was probably also a draw, especially as some consider it to be Shakespeare's finest tragedy.

This version is set in a fictionalised modern-day England, which is now a military dictatorship ruled over by Lear. He decides to divide his kingdom between his three daughters according to which of them professes to love him most. The youngest, Cordelia (Pugh), refuses to play along and is banished as a result.

However, while the eldest two, Goneril and Regan (Watson), may have been prepared to publicly

flatter their father, it's a very different story once they have acquired power.

Meanwhile, Lear's prime minister, Gloucester, is having family problems of his own as he is betrayed by his son Edmund (Macmillan) and his other son, Edgar (Scott), is forced to go into hiding. As Lear loses his grip on his sanity, the kingdom descends into war...

It's a story that's been around for centuries - it's believed that Shakespeare took his inspiration from the second edition of The Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande by Raphael Holinshed, published in 1587 - but Scott is hoping that this version can bring it to a whole new audience.

The Sherlock star told Digital Spy: "People sometimes think, 'Shakespeare's not really for me, because I don't understand that particular word', and that doesn't matter in any way."

I hate the idea that this kind of drama is only for a select few... that's not the way it should be."



Anthony Hopkins stars as King Lear, Monday, BBC2, 9.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Peter Kay's Car Share - The Finale BBC1, 10pm

The recent one-off unscripted episode may have been a treat, but what many Car Share fans really wanted was an instalment that finally resolved the will-they-won't-they storyline between workmates Kayleigh (Sian Gibson) and John (Peter Kay). That's because the second and supposedly final series ended last year with Kayleigh getting out of the car, seemingly for good, after she confessed her feelings for John and he struggled to open up about his own emotions. It was a surprisingly downbeat ending to a usually heart-warming sitcom, and 100,000 viewers signed an online petition insisting Kay and Gibson couldn't leave it there. So, we're getting a final edition to reveal what happened next - but will fans get the happy ending they've been hoping for or will they have to start another petition?

TUESDAY

Grammar Schools: Who Will Get In? BBC2, 9pm

New series. Tens of thousands of children across England take the 11 plus selection test each year, and for the first time in decades there are plans to expand selective education. Filmed over one term with access to three schools in Bexley, which has a

fully selective education system, cameras follow children and teachers to see how selection impacts on education. This edition follows children from Upland Primary School as they prepare to take the test right up until results day. They include 10-year-old Joanita, who has had extra lessons outside school for nearly three years in preparation.

WEDNESDAY

The Big Crash Diet Experiment BBC1, 8pm

It used to be the case that people looking to shed the pounds were advised to avoid crash diets that promised quick results in favour of doing it 'sensibly' by making smaller, long-term lifestyle changes. But now a series of scientific trials have led researchers to ask whether some seemingly extreme weight-loss methods might be the answer to the obesity crisis. To see if the results of these highly controlled studies translate to the real world, A&E doctor and presenter Dr Javid Abdelmoneim, who up until now has been suspicious of crash dieting, and a team of experts are putting four volunteers on an extreme

10-week programme. In the process, they'll be showing why dieting isn't just about weight loss, but also about the health benefits that come with it.

Carry on Brussels

Channel 4, 10pm

The second of three programmes following an eclectic group of British MEPs as they brace themselves for Brexit. Ukip's Hermann Kelly thinks Brexit is in danger of going soft, so sets off to find stories of EU excesses to feed to sympathetic journalists. Lone Liberal Democrat MEP Catherine Bearder has the ear of the Parliament's chief Brexit negotiator Guy Verhofstadt, and determines to use her ally to frustrate Brexit. However, when she votes against the UK government, her tactics risk backfiring as the lead negotiator David Davis calls for her to be sacked.



Carry on Brussels, Wednesday, Channel 4, 10pm

THURSDAY

Britain's Best Home Cook BBC1, 8pm

Week five of the home cooking contest sees the contestants starting out with dessert as they put their individual spin on a chocolate pudding. The sweet dishes served to the judges include an ambitious chocolate charlotte, a Black Forest gateau and one that integrates a root vegetable. Next they are given just one hour to invent a sweet or savoury dish using aubergine or tofu as the key ingredient - before the elimination round sees the weakest cooks following a recipe for a classic oriental dish. Presented by Claudia Winkleman.

FRIDAY

Tracey Breaks the News BBC1, 9.30pm

New series. Tracey Ullman reacts to the events of the moment, alongside her incarnations of politicians including Theresa May, Nicola Sturgeon and new for this second series, Michael Gove and Jacob Rees-Mogg. Jeremy Corbyn has an awkward meeting with an old friend, beleaguered German chancellor Angela Merkel reassesses her image and media mogul Rupert Murdoch spends some quality time with one-time model and now his better half Jerry Hall. With Ben Miller.

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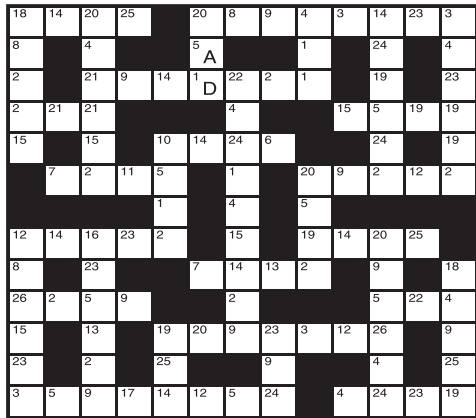
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BRAIN GYM

No.481

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

R	T	G	N	J	K	P	H	W	F	C	M	B
Y	U	X	Q	I	E	Z	A	O	L	V	D	S

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

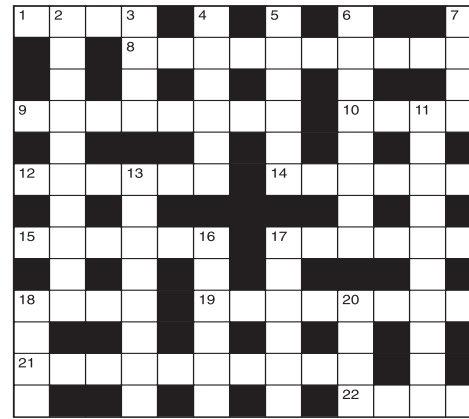
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Current recessions (4)
- They make their names as proverbial listeners (10)
- Fellow actor? (8)
- Divan, so far unfinished (4)
- Second importance (6)
- Quake in the centre, more or less (6)
- Disturb the master flow (6)
- Throw the French in a stronghold (6)
- If there's a man around he's from the U.S. (4)
- They secure temporary accommodation (4-4)
- Extensive property (10)
- Southern timber used in window construction (4)

Down

- Paperhanger who mails his account? (4-6)
- Check part of the sailing tackle (4)
- Father divides the remains of a meal (6)
- Thanks! What's borrowed is to be a gift (6)
- I left the priests in churches (8)
- A major land-mass, though it could be minor (4)
- Twelve-inch candles used in theatres (10)
- Train for employment (8)
- Decimal used in some tricky calculations (6)
- Frank is able - and proved it (6)
- We're breaking up the vessel (4)
- Gives someone their due (4)



Quick Clues:

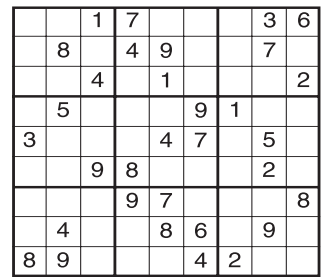
Across

- Experience (4)
- Retort (6,4)
- Flying beetle (8)
- Orient (4)
- Of the sea (6)
- Invent (6)
- Centre (6)
- Abrupt (6)
- Drawback (4)
- Bully (8)
- Imposter (10)
- Augments (4)

Down

- Diggings (10)
- Woman (4)
- Seek to attain (6)
- Entitled (6)
- Seen (8)
- Burlesque (4)
- Nourishment (10)
- Poor (8)
- Symbol (6)
- War-cry (6)
- Unchanged (4)
- Harden by heat (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	8	6	4	2	7	3	5	9
2	5	4	3	1	9	6	7	8
3	9	3	7	6	5	8	1	2
4	6	1	9	7	3	2	8	4
5	4	7	5	9	8	6	2	3
6	8	2	3	1	4	5	7	9
7	3	4	8	2	9	1	5	6
8	7	9	1	5	6	3	4	8
9	5	6	2	8	7	4	9	1

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Onion; 8 Trouble; 9 Nowhere; 10 Voter; 12 Constraints; 15 Auctioneer; 18 Tress; 19 Gleaner; 21 Consort; 22 Eaten.
Down: 1 Counteract; 2 Views; 3 Once; 4 Stress; 5 Converse; 6 Abstain; 11 Restaurant; 13 Omission; 14 Screens; 16 Negate; 17 Unity; 20 Eden.
QUICK - Across: 7 Idler; 8 Calling; 9 Habitude; 10 Rapid; 12 Patience; 15 Subterfuge; 18 Yield; 19 Elector; 21 Recital; 22 Swing.
Down: 1 Dishonesty; 2 Globe; 3 Fret; 4 Accept; 5 Alarming; 6 Simpler; 11 Discourage; 13 Anecdote; 14 Absence; 16 Feeble; 17 Stain; 20 Elise.

Quiz

- In which S American city did Erich Honecker die?
- To which organisation did the ship Rainbow Warrior belong?
- Who founded the Church of Scientology in 1954?
- Which countries were joined in the Act of Union of 1707?
- Who wrote The Firm and The Pelican Brief?
- By what name is tetanus or trismus also known?
- Which composer wrote The Pines of Rome?
- Of which group of islands is Naxos the largest?
- Which singer's departure closed the musical Piaf?
- Who wrote Our Man in Havana?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 13; 2 Sark; 3 Ricky Gervais; 4 Louis Mountbatten; 5 Paddy Ashdown; 6 Boris Pasternak; 7 A primate; 8 Twilight of the Gods; 9 Popocatepetl; 10 Tuberculosis.

Niner: MODULATES

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

674385 gives a dwelling,
6745841 gives a second dwelling,
982 gives a third dwelling.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

ADVERTISEMENT

'One-stop' dental services have Lynn

Singing for joy

LYNN Jones lives life at a hundred miles an hour; her days punctuated with gardening in her village home, classes for Pilates and keep-fit, reaching for the high notes in her local Sing for Fun choir and planning her next holiday.

"I can't sing, but it's an hour-and-a-half of pure joy," she declares.

Admitting to being only the slightest bit older than her 70th milestone, she is the perfect example of all that's great about British country life retirement. Intelligent, full of energy

and laughing easily, she admits to being driven to do things - lots of things.

"Life is for living and Keith [husband] and myself embrace retirement. I'm always on the go, I've always got something on and I need things with me to be right," she says.

Her conversation is light and shares with an eager enthusiasm plans for a month's adventure in Canada.

"We want to do the whole thing... Vancouver, Banff, the glacial lakes, the Rockies," she adds.

Unaware

But as she relaxes in the rest room at North Street Dental and Implant Clinic, her upbeat demeanour momentarily changes. "I'm very difficult to live with when my teeth are not right."

Just as the rest of my health needs to be right, so do my teeth. Isn't that right, Keith!" she declares.

Lynn was unaware of problems with her teeth until a regular check-up revealed an upper prosthetic, secured on four mini implants, was not seating correctly. She was originally

referred to the dentist who had undertaken the implant work.

"Unfortunately he had retired," adds the former media employee and member of a public partnership that contributed to the BBC's purposes remit.

"It was my neighbour who recommended I should see Steven Burchell after his wife had received implants at the clinic," she recalls.

Unexpectedly, Lynn found further approval while waiting for a delayed homebound flight at the Palma Airport, Majorca.

"Sitting next to us was a lady just making conversation. I asked how far she had to travel after the plane landed and said she lived in Dudley. I mentioned that I was due to see a dentist there."

"Right away she asked 'would that be Steven Burchell?'"

"That's where I go," she added.

Principal Steven DipCDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353, adds: "We will not carry out any non-essential surgical procedure and there was no need to replace the mini implants."

The service I have received has been excellent and worth every penny.

"We did, however, provide a new prescription for both upper and lower prosthetics and the outcome is a very happy one with natural aesthetics and excellent function."

Praising the "complete appointment" experience, Lynn explains: "I was able to see Owain [clinical lead dentist], have time with Sophie the hygienist, see Steven Burchell and Steve [Morris, advanced dental technician] to get the prosthetics professionally cleaned. It's an invaluable service and for someone like me, who could be travelling for more than an hour to get here "The service I have received has been excellent and worth every penny," she says.

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The ingredients

All food is made freshly cooked on order and the dishes have the warmth of homemade Indian cooking. The chefs take great care in selecting the best quality ingredients. The restaurant also offers a large selection of wines and beer from around the world.



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At Bangla Lounge, healthy eating is high on the agenda if you prefer to have low calorie version of your favourite dishes prepared, they are able to specially prepare most dishes using less oil, no butter or ghee-less food colouring resulting in lighter meals.

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can cater for up to 40 guests is ideal for work parties birthday celebrations anniversaries. Takeaways are available and home delivery service for free within a three-mile radius.

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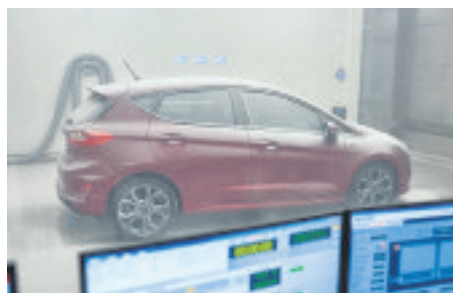
Altitudes higher than Mont Blanc, the tallest Alpine peak, vehicle and wind speeds of up to 250 km/h (155 mph), snow, glaring sunlight and rain are among conditions that are a push of a button away in Europe's most advanced automotive environmental test centre.

On an area the size of a football pitch, engineers can now take vehicles on demanding journeys around the world, from the desert heat of the Sahara, to the arctic cold of Siberia and the heavy humidity of Costa Rica.

"The vast range of punishing simulation tests will enable Ford drivers to be confident their vehicles can handle whatever climate zone they live in," said Joe Bakaj, vice president, product development, Ford of Europe.

"Travelling to the four corners of this building is like taking a trip to the four corners of the world, and our engineers will do that around the clock, every day, to continue to develop future best-in-class vehicles."

The subject of a €70 million investment, the test centre offers the first automotive wind tunnel that can simulate 5,200 metres, the same elevation as the Mount Everest North Base Camp, and the first with such a range of conditions that can be simulated under



Engineers can work on up to ten vehicles at a time



You can create a category 5 hurricane

one roof. The facility can also cool two rooms to – 40 C and heat them up to 55 C, as well as generate 95 per cent humidity.

The temperature extremes make the facility at the centre in Cologne, Germany, the hottest, coldest and most humid place in Europe, and home to the highest point in Western Europe.

In the UK, Ford Dunton's Environmental Test Laboratory has been capable of simulating

altitudes up to 3,660m since 1999 – as well as temperatures from –40 to +55 deg Centigrade. Now fully operational, engineers can work on up to ten different vehicles simultaneously. Testing covers comfort, safety and durability, as well as electrical performance, braking, air conditioning, trailer towing, cabin heating and traffic jam situations. Engineers analyse the effects of high-speed winds on exterior parts, check



The facility can also cool two rooms to – 40 C and heat them up to 55 C, as well as generate 95 per cent humidity

the robustness against rain and snow, and see how fast a windscreen defrosts at different temperatures.

"The Environmental Test Centre represents a significant investment for Ford of Europe that will help enable the company here to develop vehicles for global markets," said Bakaj.

All Ford vehicles will be tested, which features three climate wind tunnels, including a high-altitude lab, and four temperature-controlled

test chambers, one of which will also facilitate humidity testing:

"We can see how windshield wipers function in Arctic temperatures, how engine performance changes in extreme heat and cold, and even how much snow falls on the driver's head when they open the door. It's an engineer's dream," said Michael Steup, project manager, Environmental Test Centre, Ford of Europe.

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The higher seating position gives better visibility

New Sport model adds a new dimension to the Jazz range

By John Griffiths

Honda's smallest car, the Jazz, has enjoyed a loyal following from motorists around the world in the past 17 years – but now the company has made a conscious decision to broaden its appeal.

For the first time it gives buyers the option of a new, more powerful engine. That may appeal to younger drivers, of course, but also to the family motorist since the latest Jazz offers more cabin space than most typical compact hatchbacks, more like mid-size models.

Head and leg room in the rear are particularly generous and it has an above average 354 litres of boot space. A 'magic seat' system allows you the flexibility to juggle between passengers and luggage, with up to 1,314 litres of cargo capacity with just two people on board. The rear seats can also be reclined to cosset your passengers, while the front seats and steering wheel have a wide range of adjustment to suit individual drivers.

The extra oomph will be welcome if you're carrying a family and their luggage, with the added advantage that it comes in a new, high specification Sport trim.

The new 1.5 litre engine is another Honda i-VTEC unit, well known for their smooth, free revving nature. But it endows the Sport with 130PS of power and 155Nm of torque (compared to 102Ps and 123Nm for its standard



The interior is spacious with high quality trim

1.3 litre stablemate). The Sport is significantly quicker (0 to 62mph in 8.7 as opposite to 11.2 seconds) putting it in warm hatchback territory, with an equally improved 'in-gear' performance for overtaking.

Official average fuel economy is 47.9mpg – as that's a laboratory test I was pleasantly surprised by the 43mpg achieved in real-world driving. Its CO2 rating is 133g/km. The optional automatic (CVT) transmission is a little more economical than the six-speed manual in the test car.

It is quite a tall car, with benefits including a higher hip height (for easier access) and, of course, the higher seating position and better visibility which have made compact SUVs so popular.

The Sport has its own, tuned suspension set-up to reflect its increased power which works surprisingly well, balanced effective dynamics with a supple ride.

I confess I was a bit unsure of the Sport in the first few miles, as it felt very light. But in fact that characteristic which is much appreciated around town is a little misleading – on the open road it threads its way competently and without fuss through the twisty bits. Even the bumpy ones. This relaxed competence adds to the refined, mature nature of the Sport,

The test car was a Sport Navi model with a list price of £17,765 – go for the standard Sport and you lose the Garmin satnav but save £610. That's just over £1,000 more than the top of the range 1.3 litre Jazz.

From the outside, additional styling features are more subtle than flashy: 16-inch alloys, sports bumpers, side sills, a tailgate spoiler and LED headlights. The interior stands out not only for its space but for the high quality, soft touch materials by no means common in this class.

As is inevitable these days, the dash is dominated by a seven-inch colour touchscreen controller, handling a rage of functions as well as navigation including phone and internet connectivity and vehicle systems. Audio controls are also duplicated by buttons on the steering wheel.

There is air conditioning, electric windows and mirrors which are also heated), automatic headlights and wipers, front and rear parking sensors. The car is also fitted with the latest safety technology, apart from front, side and curtain airbags it has ABS, stability control, hill start assist and a 'city brake' system to help avoid those all-too-common low speed shunts. There is also a tyre pressure warning system, speed limiter linked to the traffic sign recognition system, lane departure warning and auto dipping headlights.

The model adds a new dimension to the Jazz range, in terms of performance and specification. It's particularly flexible seating, and class-leading interior space, make it highly competitive in this sector of the market.

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3

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Public Notices

PUBLIC & LEGAL NOTICES

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FREDA YOUNG (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of Residential Care Home Breach House Holy Cross Lane Bilbrough formerly of Fairy Glen Hotel Belies y Coed in the County of Borough of Conwy, who died on 21/12/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned on or before 25/07/2018, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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10 Personals

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From left, Jake White, Charlie Barnett, Adam Maberley and Bob Prince from East Park Wolves



From left, Chris Jukes, Paul Heard, Lee Kemp and Brandon Whetton from Wednesfield Aces



East Park Wolves Chairman Albert Bentley

Cycle speedway club on track to host the world

SPORTING FEATURE

By Matt Maher

"We feel the profile of the club has been boosted and we have shown we can handle such a big event."

HAVING successfully hosted the cream of European cycle speedway, East Park Wolves are now aiming to make their mark on the world stage.

The club, which operates from the Wolverhampton park of the same name, will launch a bid to bring the 2021 World Championships to the city.

It comes after the club successfully hosted the European Championships, attracting big crowds as the best riders on the continent went wheel-to-wheel over three days of thrilling action.

East Park Wolves chairman Albert Bentley said: "It was an absolutely brilliant weekend for the club. It was a great three days of racing."

Boosted

"We feel the profile of the club has been boosted and we have shown we can handle such a big event. It was a massive achievement for all the volunteers who work so tirelessly to push the club on. The only bigger event in the sport than the Europeans is the worlds, so that is logically the next step."

The club has now launched a funding drive in order to build the permanent toilet block required for their bid to be successful.

Bentley said: "We will need about £10,000 to build the toilets by the track and make the other improvements needed, such as a covered pitlane."

"To many people 2021 will feel a long way off but we need to start planning now. Our bid will be lodged



Action from one of the heats at the Cycle Speedway European Championships at East Park

with British Cycling and they will make the final decision. I think we tick a lot of boxes."

Appetites were whetted by the success of the European Championships, which were won by Czeszochowa after a close fought Grand Final which saw the Polish rivals edge out their much fancied domestic rivals Leszno in the final heat. Local pride was delivered by Wednesfield Aces, who took the final place on the podium ahead of the third of the Polish triumvirate, Torun.

The Aces, led by junior world champion and former East Park youth ace Brandon Whetton, had qualified second behind Leszno in the semi-finals. Torun claimed victory in the other semi-final, ahead of Czeszochowa.

Yet it was the latter who would be crowned champions at the end of the day, former world No.1 Marcin Szczymanski sealing the deal by winning the last race of more than 200 staged over the course of the tournament.

"We were treated to some excellent racing," said

East Park head coach Bob Prince. "Czeszochowa were deserved winners in the end. They were not the favourites at the start but they rode smartly."

"There were a number of other good performances. It was great to see Wednesfield in the final and being led by a rider who learned his trade at East Park."

"Aside from two or three Australian riders, what we saw was the best guys in the business going wheel-to-wheel. There are not many who can live with them when they are on their game."

"Strength in depth always tells. There are four riders in a team and a reserve. Over a busy weekend, you need everyone to contribute."

"A lot of hard work went into it from the club's perspective and it has helped raise our profile. If we can improve the facilities the way we want, with the new toilet block and covered pits, it will make our track among the best in the sport."

To ride or volunteer with East Park Wolves visit eastparkwolves.webs.com or, to offer sponsorship, call Albert Bentley on 07814 641367.



Teams compete at the European Championships

Tennis legend Ann returns for Classic

ONE of Britain's greatest ever tennis players joined a host of other female tennis stars from her home city to look ahead to the Nature Valley Classic Birmingham.

Former British No 1 Ann Jones, who won eight Grand Slam titles during an illustrious career, was at the Edgbaston Priory Club – the venue for the women's Classic – with Birmingham's current British Under-18 champion Lillian Mould.

Jones, from Kings Heath, has a long association with the tournament, which is now in its 38th year. She played an important role in getting it onto the international WTA (Women's Tennis Association) circuit and her contribution was recognised in 2012 following the £5 million refurbishment of the venue when the new centre court was named after her.

The line-up for this year's tournament, which takes place between June 16-24 features reigning Wimbledon champion Garbiñe Muguruza, five-time Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova and British star Johanna Konta.

Expert referee Wiley back in black at HQ

ALAN Wiley refereed plenty of big games during his stint with the whistle and has now agreed to come out of retirement to take on what could be his toughest test of all – officiating two teams of referees!

The Burntwood whistle-blower will be in charge of a charity match at the Birmingham FA County headquarters on Sunday, June 3. The fixture has been organised by The Whistle Foundation – a group of four referees who have taken on the task of staging a match each year to raise funds for various charities.

This year's game is in memory of former referee Richard Eades, who died last year, with the proceeds going to Smile for Joel, a charity set up in to honour Saddlers fans Joel Richards, Adrian Evans and Patrick Evans who were killed in the Tunisia terror attack in 2015.

Jamie Lunn, Ajay Sharma, Greg Rollason and Matt Bond are the fab four who got the ball rolling last year with a match at Wolves' training ground which helped raise £1,800 for St John Ambulance.

More Games events for the Black Country

THE Black Country could play host to more sports at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, it has been revealed.

Beach volleyball and archery have been suggested as possibilities for the region when the competition arrives in the West Midlands in four years' time.

Most of the events will be centred around the host city Birmingham, but some will be staged further afield including swimming and diving, which will be held at a newly-built aquatics centre in Smethwick. Cycling events could also be held at Cannock Chase.

A report on the Games from the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership has now revealed beach volleyball and archery could be brought to the Black Country if it is confirmed they will be among sports at the competition.

It will be seen as a boost by local politicians and sports leaders who have been keen to expand the Black Country's role in the Birmingham Games.



SPORTS DESK 01902 319531

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Rutter gets on podium before TT

MICHAEL Rutter rolled back the years to secure a stunning 32nd podium at the North West 200.

Using all his experience around the Northern Irish road circuit, the 46-year-old brought his Bathams BMW home in third place during the opening superbike class race.

The Brierley Hill-born rider also set a new personal best lap, averaging 122.162mph around the 8.9-mile circuit, on Saturday.

Race winner Glenn Irwin opened up a sizeable lead but the battle for second saw five riders dicing for podium places.

Rutter finished fourth on track but was promoted to third after a five-second time penalty for Alastair Seeley. He said: "I was delighted to get on to the podium and I wasn't sure where I'd finished to be honest as it wasn't clear if Alastair had picked up a penalty or not."

"I'd have been happy with fourth as I felt like I rode well and the bike was working well too, so to finish on the podium again was a real nice bonus. We were in contention throughout though and while it was a hard race, we deserved a good finish."

Rutter suffered gearbox issues in the second superstock race of the meeting, getting home 13th – nine places worse than the first superstock race last Thursday. The feature seven-lap superbike race was the final battle of the day and Rutter – who heads to the Isle of Man TT races this week – came home seventh after a six-way battle for second place.

Stourbridge go joint top

STOURBRIDGE are the new leaders of Birmingham League Division 3, alongside Rugby, thanks to a 161-run win over Newport.

Stourbridge piled up 263-5 with Jujhar Johal hitting 84 and skipper Josh Banks unbeaten on 67. Impressive bowling from Dwayne Crossgill (5-20) and Jitesh Jivan-Patel (3-30) saw Newport crash to 102 all out.

The top four teams in Birmingham League Division 1 extended their winning streak and remain locked together at the top of the table on 65 points, 17 points clear of fifth placed Bridgnorth, who were one wicket winners over Halesowen at Cricket Meadow.

A patient unbeaten 80 from opening batsman Jamie Harris steered Halesowen to 185-7, helped by an unbeaten 40 from Masharraf Shazad after the visitors had slumped to 110-7 and then 136-8 before 59 from Tom Weaver turned the tide. He fell with four required to win but skipper and number 11 batsman Sam Whitney hit the first and only ball he faced – the last ball of the contest – for six.

Team hopes to net help towards trip



Sedgley Scorpions under-8s west

A FOOTBALL team is hoping for bags of help towards its plea for funding.

Sedgley Scorpions under-8s west have applied to supermarket chain Tesco to help it expand and take youngsters on a footballing trip to play other teams at a Butlin's tournament.

Shoppers will decide on their favourite group or organisation to

benefit from the fundraising initiative, with £4,000 being handed to the one with the most votes. Second prize is £2,000 and £1,000 goes to the third.

Team manager Chris Sandland said: "I'm trying my best to push for first place as this will allow us to expand and keep going for a number of years."

"Our project is available to vote

in Dudley, Gornal, Kingswinford, Pensnett stores. The vote runs until June 30."

The team was set up 18 months ago as a five-a-side outfit, but will soon move on to play seven-a-side.

Chris said: "We are currently at full capacity but if we were able to hire the whole pitch out at our training facility we could invite more kids to come and train."

TROPHY HOPES DEALT A BLOW

CRADLEY'S National Trophy hopes are hanging in the balance after their first defeat of the season.

Heathens slipped up 49-40 at the hands of fellow homeless club Coventry at Monmore on a night of tension and drama on Monday.

The absence of brilliant teenager Drew Kemp was too much for Heathens to cope with, which is clearly a concern going forward as he will also miss the trip to Buxton on Sunday.

New signing Alfie Bowtell did a fine job on debut for the Motor Market Heathens with 12+3 from his six outings but there were too many weak links in the home side.

Kyle Bickley held off former Heathens skipper Jon Armstrong for an important win in heat 12 to keep Cradley within five of the visitors. When the brilliant Connor Mountain passed Heathens skipper Adam Roynon in heat 13 it was a crushing blow for Will Pottinger's men.

Victory was assured for Coventry when former Heathens title winner Danny Phillips secured a brilliant win ahead of Jason Edwards with Jamie Halder third to go seven points up with one to go.

Disappointing

Heathens co-promoter Nigel Pearson said: "With us already missing a key rider like Drew Kemp it's obvious we needed the remaining lads to step up to the plate."

"It's disappointing to lose but there were some positives and Jason Edwards impressed us particularly, as well as Alfie Bowtell on debut."

"I thought Will Pottinger did everything right, his programme changes were spot on and I don't think he could have done anything more than he did."

"Coventry were the better all-round side and I congratulate them for that. They fully deserved their win."

"It means we are in a real battle for qualification for the final now. We cannot afford to be a four-man team and we must do better."

State-of-the-art pitch opens



Jody Craddock, Councillor Dave Tyler and Pete Thompson with All Stars Paul Jones, Colin Taylor, Mel Eves, Nigel Quashie and Shane Taylor

THE beautiful game is looking better than ever in Dudley after the opening of a new £640,000 artificial football pitch at the Dell Stadium.

The floodlit 3G playing surface was officially opened by the Mayor of Dudley last week at an event that included a match between Wolves All Stars and Dudley Town FC, led by Jody Craddock and Pete Thompson respectively.

The pitch cost around £644,000 – made up

of £543,927 funding from the Premier League and the FA Facilities Fund, which is delivered by the Football Foundation, and £100,000 from Dudley Council.

The investment is in addition to the local authority's commitment to invest £24.5 million in wider leisure services across the Dudley borough, which also includes plans for a new leisure centre in Dudley.

Knockout reception for young boxer



Councillor Dave Tyler with Sahil Khan

A RISING star of the amateur boxing scene was guest of honour at a knockout civic reception in Dudley to celebrate his success. Sahil Khan, a pupil at Hillcrest School, trains at Merridale Boxing Club in Wolverhampton and has become one to watch in the sport, qualifying for the European Championships, in Russia, in October.

Last weekend Dudley and England's Sahil Khan took gold in the Junior and Schools Three Nations boxing tournament in Scotland with victory over Scotland's David Quinn, when Khan's stylish performance earned him a unanimous win. Led by Coach Amanda Coulson the 28-strong Team England came away with 18 gold, four silver and four bronze medals.

Outgoing Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Dave Tyler, in one of his final civic functions before ending his year, held a reception to celebrate Dudley teenager Sahil's previous success in becoming a National Junior Boxing Champion in his weight division.

Neal gets his fourth title bid moving

MATT Neal finally got his bid for a fourth British Touring Cars Championship title moving in the right direction after picking up his first win of the season on Sunday.

The Stourbridge race ace qualified on pole at Thruxton and held that position all the way to the chequered flag in the first of three races.

He followed that up with a third-placed finish in race two and eighth in the final reverse-grid race.

That catapulted Neal in his Halfords Yuasa Racing Honda Civic Type R up the standings from 17th to sixth, 28 points behind leader Adam Morgan.

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